

EMILY DE VARMONT;

OR

DIVORCE

Dictated by necessity;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

*The Amours of Father Sévin.*

FROM THE FRENCH OF LOUVET,

Late President of the National Convention of France,  
Author of *Faublas*, &c.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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## EMILY DE VARMONT.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

August 16, midnight.

'TIS all over with your sister! 'tis all over! No longer must I entertain any hope of ever enjoying happiness on this side the grave — happiness, did I say? — I must not even expect to find peace. Wherever peace has fixed her abode, let me but make my appearance, and she instantly vanishes. Misfortune, which so closely pursues my steps, involves every one who comes near me. Woe betide the person, whoever he be, who, impelled by a fatal attachment to

me, shall venture to unite his fate with mine! He will soon become the object of universal pity, while my condition will only be rendered more deplorable.

Before I came to intrude on his peaceful retreat, Father Sévin enjoyed some portion of comfort and satisfaction: but since I have taken up my abode with him, what a wretched reverse! At sight of me, each tranquil pleasure has fled the house — never more to return. No longer is my uncle capable of attending to those domestic duties which he formerly looked on as an amusement rather than a toil. His garden is no longer cultivated: — his favourite birds languish, forgotten and unfed: — their master himself withers and consumes: — his youth, worn out with care and chagrin, is rapidly hast-

ening away at the approach of premature old age :— in fine, his sacred duties, the most holy functions of his ministry, are become insupportable to him : I see him carry to the very altar his melancholy rêveries — his deep distraction — his bitter tears — his despair !

And I, Dorothy, who am the author of such complicated calamity — do you think I can remain an indifferent spectator of the scene ? — No ! my soul, harrowed up with racking anguish, is no longer susceptible of the smallest consolation. — But, even if this were not the case, where are now the consolations which fortune might have reserved in store for me ? — For some days past, Monsieur Dolerval appears to be full as unhappy as my uncle : —

like him, he constantly wears a countenance of anxiety, and is immersed in melancholy rêveries. A visible alteration appears in him from day to day. His countenance, now pale and discoloured, no longer retains that engaging sweetness which once constituted its principal beauty, — but presents manifest traces of corroding care. His eyes too — his eyes, inflamed and swollen, seldom sparkle with that lively fire which heretofore gave them such animation. Even his voice is impaired. — Sometimes, confused and agitated, he seems inclined to make us the depositaries of a painful secret which seems to sit heavy on his mind: — but a certain fear, apparently bordering on distrust, immediately checks him — and he only explains himself by half-smothered sighs,

If Father Sévin is not afraid to hear the dreadful secret, I cannot conceive by what unaccountable fatality it happens that he throws every obstacle in the way to prevent his communicating it. — I believe I have already told you that my uncle hardly allows me time to perform the duties of common civility to his friend on his arrival. <sup>But</sup> it is not music that now prevents our conversation: — a book is put into Monsieur Dolerval's hands the moment he enters the house — and what kind of book, think you? — A book in which the author labours to prove that sordid self-interest is the grand principle of all our actions, — that, consequently, there is very little of genuine virtue to be found in the world, — no filial tenderness, for instance, — no fraternal affection, — no faithful and disinterested

love, — not even any sincere friendship! — But supposing all this to be true, what good purpose can it answer, to present mankind with this frightful picture of their own deformity? For my part, that vile book wounds me to the very soul; it afflicts — it disgusts — it humiliates — it discourages me. And as to my uncle, his sorrows must have prodigiously impaired the native goodness of his disposition, since he can already take pleasure in such reading, and especially since he can persevere in tormenting us with it every day. Don't you perceive, Dorothy, that this abominable system, if once adopted, would make us detest the whole human race? — Alas! “no faithful and disinterested love!” Is not the very idea dreadful?

“Not even any sincere friendship!” —



I should indeed be tempted to look on this odious maxim as true, if the scenes to which of late I have been a witness, were long to continue. The one of the two friends often forgets the kindness and attention he owes to the other. Father Sévin no longer addresses the young man in the same gentle and friendly manner as heretofore — but with evident symptoms of peevish impatience — and sometimes in a tone of asperity which is absolutely intolerable. But what astonishes me still more, is, that Monsieur Dolerval himself very frequently gives way to fits of ill-humour. The other evening — no, 'twas yesterday — but to me it appears a whole age — yesterday evening, Monsieur Dolerval — disgusted, I suppose, as I was, with the book in question — flung it down on the table, in rather



an abrupt manner, I grant : — but, immediately struck with this breach of decorum, he leaned for support on the table, covered his face with both his hands, and remained for some minutes in that attitude of humiliation. During the interval, Dorothy, I saw his breast heave with rapid and unequal throbs, — I perceived some tears drop between his fingers, — and my heart was deeply moved at the sight. At length my uncle, who had silently observed us, rose from his seat, and in a melancholy tone of voice, but which on this occasion had nothing offensive in it, “ You will allow,” said he to his young friend, “ that the awkward figure we both exhibit at this moment, must be very far from entertaining to my niece.”

— as I was with the book in my hand  
“ Though you are pleased to say we,”

replied Dolerval, "I can perceive that the remark is intended for me alone. Ah! if I had but sufficient resolution to remain at home, and there conceal my weakness, you would, no doubt, be better pleased. No doubt, it would be much more convenient for you, that your friend, satisfied at a distance with the tranquil consciousness of your happiness, should never come here to interrupt it."

"What!" cried my uncle in a tone of passion, "You banter me then! — If I were you, Dolerval — if I entertained those ideas which you have dared to express — I would at least be generous enough to exert that courage of which you speak."

"I have long expected this," replied

Dolerval, now kindling in his turn.  
“You may rely on it, I shall endeavour to follow your advice.”

Accordingly he started up from his seat, and was hastily retiring, — but suddenly stopped for a moment, and, casting a parting look at me, uttered these words, in which my uncle fancied he perceived an insult to himself and to Juliette, but which, to my apprehension, do not convey any distinct meaning that can possibly excite my anger, although their strange and mysterious obscurity may give me some uneasiness — “Undoubtedly, Sir, you are very happy in having Mademoiselle Juliette under your roof : but never — since you force me to speak my mind — never could I have thought that *you*, like so many others, would one day have a *niece* !”

After this speech he immediately quitted the house. We have not seen him this afternoon; and it is now four-and-twenty long hours since he has been here.

I plainly see that this last quarrel will leave a durable resentment on his mind:—my uncle on the other hand, who is equally in fault, and who still perseveres in putting an insulting construction on his words, which were wholly enigmatical,—my uncle, I say, solemnly protests that on the present occasion he will not go in quest of him. What! “not even any real friendship!”—Yet, after all, is my uncle so much to blame?—What business had that cruel young man in this house? and how strangely did he behave when he was here! If

he is married, why does he come to disturb our peace? — and if he is not, what great reason has he for affliction? how can he think of causing me such uneasiness? — It is now full four-and-twenty hours since I have seen him!

At length my eyes are opened — somewhat too late, I grant — but I will never suffer them to be again blinded. — That distressing measure, which I thought impracticable, is the only one that I now can adopt: — I must flee — I must go — no matter whither, provided I do but flee to some place remote, far remote, from this spot where my presence entails misery on all around me. A few days more, equally tedious, equally melancholy with this — a few days more, and I shall have

summoned up sufficient courage to take that step. Yes, I will abandon this asylum, which affords no shelter against the inroads of the passions: but I will carefully avoid fixing my abode in any other, however secure it may appear to me. Its peaceful inhabitants would soon feel the dreadful influence of that inauspicious star which rules my fate.— Yes! I am determined on it — I will pass the remainder of my unfortunate life in wandering from village to village, without stopping any where longer than will be necessary to earn by manual labour a day's subsistence: and those tedious hours which remain unemployed, shall be spent in the lonely recesses of the most gloomy forests. Thus my condition will become more supportable: I shall have at least the



consolation of thinking that my wretchedness is confined to myself alone. — Oh ! I am wretched indeed ! — It is four-and-twenty hours since I have seen him !

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

St. Cyr, August 17.

I VOW, my life seems predestined to be a constant succession of surprises! — Happily they are sometimes of such a nature as to support my drooping spirits — to give me consolation — to restore me a ray of hope.

This afternoon, at an early hour, he came: but he was not alone: — he was accompanied by . . . . . no! my eyes had not deceived me — it was not the work of fancy, that created so strong a resemblance between Monsieur Dolerval and the unknown woman at the foot of the altar. That woman exists —

she exists precisely the same as I thought I had seen her. This day, at the very first sight I had of her from a distance, I immediately recognised her. My busy memory too faithfully reminded me of the time, the place, and the attitude, in which I had discovered her for the first time.

“And does her unfeeling husband bring her here to triumph over me? Does the perfidious wretch dare to face me in this manner — to come and insult that grief which he himself has caused?” — Such were my reflections: — my heart was wrung within me — and I felt the most acute mortification and chagrin. But conceive, Dorothy, how great the joy which succeeded that transient cloud of anxiety! Father Sévin, with evident marks of the most

lively satisfaction, ran forth to meet our fair visitant, and, in the transports of his joy, exclaimed "At length we have the pleasure of seeing Madame . . . . ." He named her, Dorothy: he named a person whom Monsieur Dolerval affectionately loves — but whom he may love without offence to any other — a person whom I myself already love, from the great encomiums I have heard him bestow on her — a woman endowed in an uncommon degree with gentleness, sensibility, goodness of heart — possessed of every virtue, every charm — a most accomplished woman — in short, Madame D'Etioules! — Yes, Dorothy, 'twas Madame D'Etioules. This explains the whole mystery of those expressions — "Come, unite two lovers! — Haste to crown her happiness and mine!" — No doubt he was impatient to see his

Eleonora blest.—Excellent youth! he knows no other happiness than that of his sister. How delighted she must be to have such a brother! And how proud I should be, if heaven had permitted . . . . . Nevertheless I am better pleased that it is she who enjoys that advantage—much better pleased indeed:—is she not much more worthy of it?

I have not any doubt at present remaining—not the smallest doubt:—it is Madame D'Etioles' secret which chance has brought to my knowledge. —Monsieur Dolerval is still free! at liberty to love any woman who has sufficient merit to win his affection!—It was his sister who was married! Oh! how delighted I am at the event! She is to be commended for it, since she

possesses every qualification that can ensure the happiness of a man of sensibility and discernment:—she is much to be commended for it.

She and I have, as it were, studied each other in a conversation which to me appeared short, and did not seem long to her, if I may take her word for it—nor to her brother, if I may venture to form an opinion on the subject. He incessantly watched us both during the whole time that this interesting conversation lasted:—and his looks ..... but it is impossible to describe them.—To see the attention with which he listened to me as I spoke, you would have imagined that his life or death solely depended on what I was about to say: and every word that fell from my lips, he pursued it, if I may hazard



the expression, to his sister's countenance, in order to discover the impression it made upon her mind. — I own that Monsieur Dolerval's attention seemed at first to be not wholly void of uneasiness. I felt hurt at the idea: for could he suppose that I would take no pains to win the esteem of a person who is so dear to him, and on whose opinion I know he sets so high a value? or had he any reason to fear that I should be incapable of gaining her good will? — However that may be, I had the good fortune to succeed; and his apprehensions were quickly banished. But you cannot form an idea of the satisfaction which beamed on his countenance every time that Madame D'Etioules was pleased to honour Juliette with an obliging smile of approbation. I thought he would have run

frantic with joy when she first condescended to pay me a very flattering compliment. In short, I know not what secret sympathy prevailed between the brother and sister — but he eagerly returned to her the caresses which she bestowed on me: — twice she embraced me — and twice he kissed her hands.

Before she took her leave, she lavished on me aloud the most pleasing encomiums; then, lowering her voice, said to her brother in an audible whisper “I discover in her all the unaffected graces of innocence — I see modesty and candor personified — I perceive those innate charms of genuine worth, which proceed from the heart alone, and which cannot be counterfeited.” — “Then,” answered he in the same

tone of voice, "I must be very culpable indeed!"

Hereupon, my uncle, who, though without any apparent emotion, gave his whole attention to this mysterious dialogue, hastily cried "Yes you are, and a thousand times more so than you suppose.—To suspect my friendship, my principles, my conduct—might still admit of some excuse:—but her modesty, her virtue, so justly entitled to the most profound respect . . . . . Ah! young man! young man . . . . ."

"Ah! my friend," exclaimed Dolerval, "pardon me! deign to intercede for me, and obtain her pardon also. And you, Madam, will you not allow me . . . . ."

His voice faltered — he was going to fall on his knees before me — when a look from his sister restrained and silenced him.

In taking her leave of me, Madame D'Etiolles repeatedly requested to be favoured with my friendship : — “ my friendship ! ” — charming woman !

But, Dorothy, what can that insult be, with which Monsieur Dolerval so bitterly reproaches himself ? Can there in fact be, in those words he uttered the other day, a hidden meaning which renders them an affront to your sister ? — Well ! since every one of them will have it so — since he himself seems to acknowledge it — then he has offended me. But, if Madame D'Etiolles had not prevented him, he would have im-

explored my forgiveness on his knees: and what words can be sufficiently criminal, to deserve that I should refuse to pardon him after that? Ah! whatever his fault has been, his tears have expiated it.

I think it almost unnecessary to observe that we have had no music this evening, although at first our party seemed disposed for a concert. Probably that was, on the part of Monsieur Dolerval, only a pretext for the visit. Besides we had not a spare moment to think of music. But I must not forget to inform you, that, during my conversation with Madame D'Eti-oles, my uncle's countenance wore that air of calm tranquillity, and, I might almost say, contentment, which I have so long wished to see restored to him.





## EMILY to DOROTHY.

18th August, nine in the morning.

**ANOTHER** disagreeable occurrence, Dorothy! Has fate determined to persecute me for ever?

This morning Father Sévin was immersed in one of his usual rêveries, when a servant came and delivered him a note. He read it — changed colour — and exclaimed “Ill-fated Madame D’Etioules! Poor Dolerval! — Hark’ye, Picard, tell your master I request he will delay one moment for my sake: — I’ll be with him in an instant — I must positively embrace him before his departure.”

“ His departure, uncle ?”

“ Alas ! my niece, yes.”

“ Ah ! uncle, I beg you will show me that letter.”

“ Impossible !”

“ Father Sévin, I entreat and conjure you.”

“ What ! the secrets of a friend ?”

“ Secrets ? — do you think he can have any secret which he wishes to conceal from me ?”

“ Cruel girl, what is this I hear from you ?”

“ Uncle, if you have any regard for me . . . . .”

“ And can you doubt it, Juliette?”

“ I ask this single proof of it.”

“ In the name of friendship, I beg you will not ask it.”

“ It is in the name of friendship I do ask it.”

“ Well, Madam, take advantage of the deplorable state to which you see me reduced : — complete my wretchedness and my shame : — force me to betray the confidence of my friend : — nay, cruelly compel me at the same time to furnish you with weapons against myself.”

I said no more to him, Dorothy: but he observed that I was overwhelmed with grief, and exclaimed "Oh! supreme power of beauty! what mortal so insensible as to resist thy influence?" At these words he delivered me the note, which I here transcribe, and moisten with my tears——

## DOLERVAL to FATHER SEVIN.

August 18.

**JUDGE**, my friend, whether I am not much to be lamented. I must instantly quit this spot which was every day becoming more and more dear to me — and I leave Madame D'Etiolles plunged in the deepest affliction.—The husband of Eleonora is an upright man — and the wicked will never cease to persecute him. Four days after his marriage, he tore himself from the arms of his bride, — a happy turn of affairs seeming to demand his speedy departure for the capital: but on the very night of his arrival in Paris he was dragged from his bed, and plunged

into the abyſſes of the Baſtille. — We have juſt received the dreadful news of this event; and it becomes indiſpenſably neceſſary that I ſhould inſtantly ſet out for Verſailles, where I muſt remain a ſufficient length of time to make a variety of applications in his favour — though, with what degree of ſucceſs, no human foreſight can determine. — Oh! my poor ſiſter!

My friend, I recommend her to your tender care and attention: and this depoſit, ſo dear to my heart, is not the only or the deareſt one intruſted to you.

My friend, do not inform your adorable niece that I burn for her with a flame which ſhall never be extinguished, — that the moſt exalted happineſs I aſpire to, is that of poſſeſſing her, —



that I am determined, at whatever price, to merit her: — no! tell her nothing of all this. My behaviour has been such as to justify your distrust, your anger, and perhaps her enmity. But condescend, at least, to assure her that my injurious suspicions, even when she shall have consented to bury them in eternal oblivion, will still continue to be a torment to my remembrance. — Adieu! how hard that I must be obliged to set out on my journey without once more seeing her! — Adieu! adieu!

My friend, do not inform your adorable niece that I burn for her with a flame which shall never be extinguished — that the most exalted happiness I aspire to is that of possessing her —

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

18th August, ten at night.

MY uncle was not long gone before I saw him return, accompanied by his young friend. "Behold, Juliette," said he, "I bring him back to you, so thoroughly convinced of his error, that he did not dare to come without your order and my permission."

"I depart, Madam," said Dolerval, "in the deepest affliction at the thoughts of quitting you: and it would render me completely miserable, were you to suffer me to entertain the idea that I carry with me your resentment, which I have but too well merited.

Ah! deign at least — I entreat you, in the name of that tender compassion which ought not always to be refused to those who are deeply sensible of their faults, — deign to give me some hope that you will one day pardon....”

Here, Dorothy, his voice was stifled with sobs — and he was unable to proceed.

“Yes, yes!” replied I, “you have my pardon — and return as soon as possible.”

These last words, which he did not expect or require, escaped me through inadvertency. Immediately he fell on his knees before me — immediately he pressed my hand to his bosom. Not a syllable dropped from his lips: but

where is the language sufficiently energetic to express the thousand unspeakable things which his eloquent silence and his ardent looks conveyed to my heart? Perhaps, in that moment of surprise and tumultuous emotion, I may have expressed my feelings in the same manner: — I know not — but at least I am glad that I cannot positively assert it — although I do not wish, Dorothy, to disguise or conceal any circumstance from your knowledge.

At that instant my uncle exclaimed “Is it not a sin to thwart their mutual affection, so tender, so innocent and pure? Ah! Dolerval, ah! Juliette, enjoy your rights! happy pair! are you not at liberty to adore each other? There can be no crime in *your* attachment!”

The tone in which he pronounced these last words, instantly reminded me of the mortifying sensations that must have been excited in his bosom by the scene which he witnessed. I immediately made an effort — perhaps a painful effort — to recover from the ecstatic delirium which had seized me — and desired Dolerval to retire. But, without waiting for his obedience to my command, I myself hastily ran out of the room.

He remained but a moment after me; and as he was going out of the house, repeatedly exclaimed to Father Sévin, “ ’Tis for life! — ’tis for life!”

On my part too, Dorothy — for in vain would I struggle against an irresistible power — ’tis for life.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

27th August, ten at night.

**EIGHT** days—to me almost as many centuries—are now elapsed since his departure; and the deep affliction of his sister seems to afford too sure a preface that he will not speedily return. I know not how I could find sufficient strength to support me during this tedious absence, if the company of Madame D'Etioules did not come in to my aid. We visit her every day. The adorable woman! a thousand times, in looking at her, I fancied he was before my eyes. It is not however the bare resemblance between their beautiful features that strikes me:—no! that en-



gaging woman possesses moreover all those charms which are the most captivating in him — his fascinating manner — his winning address — his tone of pleasing sensibility, which breathes the most consummate goodness of heart. In particular, she discovers, the moment I make my appearance, that air of lively satisfaction which her brother . . . . Her brother, she says, makes mention of me in every one of his letters to her : — but when will she show me those letters from her brother ? — He is the constant theme of our discourse ; for I plainly perceive that to converse about him, is the only consolation of which Madame D'Etiolles is at present susceptible. When I speak to her of her own afflictions, she is unable to reply — her tears immediately begin to flow : — I mingle mine with hers ; —

and Father Sévin . . . . he, poor man ! is the most wretched of the party : — he must not dare to complain — he must not shed tears !

Heretofore he sought my company — at present he studiously avoids me. All those hours which he is not obliged to sacrifice in the performance of his sacerdotal duties, he spends in the garden, in that gloomy arbour, for which he shows of late an uncommon predilection. Oft do I see him walk in it with long and hasty strides, till at length, exhausted with fatigue, he sinks on a seat : nor can I venture to go and rouse him from those profound and melancholy rêveries, lest, by the attempt, I should only aggravate his affliction. Hitherto there was but one mode I could think of, to recall him to

the presbytery — Music still possesses her wonted influence over him — I have found nevertheless that the sounds of the piano were alone insufficient to attract him : — to produce that effect, it becomes necessary to accompany it with my voice. As soon as my notes are heard in his solitary recess, he immediately quits it, — instinctively approaches the house, — advances to the parlour where I am playing, — stops at the door — and there listens with silent motionless attention. — A great change has taken place in him, Dorothy, which has not escaped my notice : — those lively airs of which he was once so fond, have now little power to rouse him from his rêveries : — it is only by plaintive tunes that I can soothe his melancholy. — The moment, however, that I cease, he immediately returns to

his solitary arbour; and if I wish to hasten his flight, I have only to hum a stanza of my favourite ballad.

But this afternoon I was deeply mortified on finding it impossible to obtain my usual success. Instead of coming as far as the parlour door, my unfortunate uncle stopped under the window. Wearied with my long-continued but fruitless efforts, I at length stepped down into the garden, where I found him stretched on a stone bench, in a kind of lethargic doze. You may judge of his condition, Dorothy, when I inform you, that, on awaking from his trance, he felt himself too weak to pay Madame D'Etioules a visit: — he had only sufficient strength to creep to that fatal arbour, where I again saw him sink into a state of annihilation, as it were:

and notwithstanding all the cares and attentions which my anxiety could suggest, it was not till sun-set that he could be prevailed on to return to the house.

On his entrance, I presented him some food, and thought it necessary to remind him that four-and-twenty hours had elapsed without his taking any refreshment.

"What matter," replied he, "if I am not hungry?"

"Uncle! dear uncle! are you then determined to die?"

"Well, my child! when life is become a burthen . . ."

At these words he retired to his chamber: I can see that his candle is still burning; and though I should rise to-morrow with the sun, I should no doubt find that Father Sévin was already up before me. I have indeed every reason to think, Dorothy, that a very small portion of his nights is devoted to sleep.

In presenting you with this alarming picture of his sufferings, I feel that I clearly point out the road which it becomes my duty to pursue. There is no longer any room for hesitation — not a moment to be lost — I must fly. — How can I think of prolonging my stay in a house where I am the source of perpetual torment to the most generous, the most unfortunate of men? — I must quit it: — my absence cannot cause



here any calamities that will bear the smallest comparison with those which arise from my presence. — But then, what is to become of me? — I know not: — but I must depart.

Depart? and shall Monsieur Doler-val, on his return, not find me here? — He would not survive the shock! And I myself . . . . . Dorothy! my dear Dorothy! do I fondly indulge a groundless hope? do you think that Madame D'Etiolles . . . . .? But whether she admits or rejects me, I must fly from the presbytery.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, August 28, noon.

**THIS** morning I rose at a very early hour. — My uncle was already in the parlour. — “What !” said he : “so early ! It seems, then, you foresaw that it would be well to have a long morning before us.”

He then proposed to me to take a turn in the garden : we walked there for a considerable time, and visited every part of it except the arbour. At length he requested me to water some flowers, — next to train up the drooping branches of a neglected woodbine, — then he whistled to his pretty

little feathered favourites, that they might come all together to receive my caresses. A moment after, at his own desire, we returned to the parlour, where I had much less difficulty than I expected in prevailing on him to take some breakfast with me.—Soon after, he pressed me to sing: and at length, as the clock struck nine, he rose from his seat in evident agitation, and

“Come,” said he: “it is time, Juliette—it is time . . . . . We did not see Madame D’Etioules yesterday:—will you do me the favour of delivering her this note?”

“With the greatest pleasure, uncle.”

I was immediately setting out:—he recalled me—

“What! in such haste! Alas! whither are you hurrying away? — One moment, Juliette! I request but one moment.”

“Dear uncle, I only wished, by my readiness and dispatch, to give you a proof of . . . .”

He did not allow me to finish the sentence, — but, in the most melting and at the same time the most heart-piercing tone, “Adieu, Juliette!” said he: “adieu, my child! — But I shall presently . . . . My niece,” added he, interrupting his unfinished purpose, “the shortest journey may become a long absence: — do not go without bidding me adieu!”

“What is this I hear? — You alarm

me! — Surely you have not conceived any sinister design against your own life?"

"I, my child? — I? — It seems then you ill know me as yet! — I may be unfortunate; but never, never will I consent to commit an intentional crime! — Banish your fears, Juliette! I am determined to live: — alas! I will live. . . . . And you, meanwhile, my dear and amiable girl, go — deliver that letter to Madame D'Etioules, and — for ever, adieu!"

At these words he sunk on his chair — a sudden alteration in his countenance betrayed evident symptoms of the most violent internal agitation, — and a convulsive tremor shook his whole frame.

“ Ah! uncle! dear uncle!” exclaimed I.

“ Be not alarmed at my situation:” replied he. “ My eyes have long forgot to weep. The tears, unable to find a passage, scald my distracted brain — if I can give them vent, I am safe. — But, go, my child — why don’t you go? I command you to go, in the name of the greatest sacrifice of which a man is capable — in the name of the sacrifice which I feel myself bound to make.”

“ Adieu, uncle! my dear uncle, adieu!”

“ Go, Juliette! charming girl! go! — and if ever you deign to bestow a thought on me — ah! think of me, I conjure you, not barely with com-



passion — but also — for perhaps I have deserved it — with good-will and esteem!"

These last words excited in my bosom a tender emotion which I was unable to controul. My uncle stretched forth his hand to me — I caught it — affectionately squeezed it — pressed it to my lips — let fall on it a tear — and suddenly darted out of the house. As I passed through the court-yard, I heard the heart-rending sighs of the poor priest; and as I was shutting the outer door of the presbytery, another adieu reached my ear. That was the last one, Dorothy: but, were I to live a hundred years, I shall never forget it.

I soon arrived at Madame D'Eti-oles', agitated to a degree that I can-

not describe. Not only was my mind disturbed by the scene I had just witnessed : — but being aware of the perhaps indiscreet request contained in the letter I had delivered, I waited with the most lively anxiety to see the effect which its perusal would produce. — It was read over — devoured as it were — in an instant : and Madame D'Etioules at the same moment exhibited tokens of surprise, of sorrow, and of joy. Then, instead of entering into any explanations, she took me by the hand, and, conducting me into an adjoining apartment, “ My dear Juliette,” said she, “ this is the chamber which I request you to occupy. In my house, be your own absolute mistress — deign to become to me a second self. Ah ! if you have occasion for my consolations, I stand in no less need of yours.”

“Madam . . . . .”

“It is not ‘Madam,’ but ‘My friend,’ that you must call me,” replied she, embracing me.

“My friend, then, my generous friend, I know not what Father Sévin may have written to you : — but if you knew in what a condition I left him . . . . .”

“You shall soon see what he has written,” replied she, putting the letter into my hand : “but as to his condition, you may make your mind easy on that score. I’ll send him a servant, who shall watch over him, and never quit him for a moment. You may depend upon it, that the greatest care shall be taken of him. Dolerval and I are suf-

ficiently rich to make the necessary provision for his friend, and to take care that he want for nothing. — But I quit you for a while : you seem to stand in need of quiet and retirement : when you choose to join society again, you know where to find me."

At these words she quitted the room. — I remained astonished and confounded at the noble simplicity of manner with which this divine woman loaded me with favours.

I will not undertake, Dorothy, to tell you what a flood of tears I shed on reading the letter from my unfortunate uncle ; — I content myself with sending you a copy of it.

FATHER SEVIN to MADAME  
D'ETIOLES.

St. Cyr, 28th August, two in the morning.

AT length my hour is come. The darkness of the night by which I am furrounded is less gloomy than that mental darkness which begins to obscure my reason. My virtue—my too feeble virtue begins to totter. One day more, and I shall perhaps lose all the fruits of my painful resistance,—perhaps insult her modesty by a confession which ought never to reach her ears.—My hour is come! every circumstance imperiously demands the cruel sacrifice. Quick! let a separation immediately take place!—Let a great

misfortune save me from a greater: and since I must at all events lose her, ah! let me at least lose her without having given her offence.

'Tis you, Madam, who are best entitled to the honour of receiving her. Your virtues give you a just claim to the privilege of being intrusted with the object of your brother's innocent affection, and of my guilty passion. Guilty! — but why guilty? why should there exist such a difference between the unfortunate Sévin and the happy Dolerval? Why where those unjust institutions established, which deprive me of those rights that he is permitted to enjoy? By what strange perversion of Nature's law am I forbidden to be a man as well as he? What power on earth has a right to prohibit the exer-



cise of those faculties with which the Almighty has endowed me, and which I still retain unimpaired? — Ah! unfeeling law-makers, who without a blush have decreed, that, from the day when I should enter into holy orders, I must cease to love the fairest, loveliest object under heaven, — why did you not at the same time provide that I should no longer possess eyes to see, ears to hear, and, above all, that I should no longer possess a heart to feel?

But what concern do they feel at the injustice, the absurdity, the impracticability of the laws they impose on their inferiors? They themselves every day trample those laws under foot. It is only for us they have enacted them — for us whom they would deem unworthy of their notice, if it were not

that they derive some advantage from our oppression,—for us, a vile, degraded, despised race — and deservedly despised, since, enslaved as we are, we are stupid enough to glory in our obedient submission to their iron yoke.

And though one of our body should be inclined to disobey them, how can he burst the fetters with which they keep him bowed down to the ground? As to myself—luckless man! — do I, in the condition which I have been compelled to embrace — do I still retain even the human figure? What woman — I mean what virtuous modest woman like Juliette — could, on seeing me clad in this garb of proscription, even suspect that I belong to the human species? And if, prompted by foolish hope, I had ventured to say to

her, "Juliette! I must possess you, or my death is the consequence," — would she not have immediately answered, "Thoughtless, inconsiderate man! what proposal can *you* make? View that funereal vest that envelops your limbs: — it is in my eyes a constant badge of your reprobation: — it is the dress of mourning — and for yourself you wear it. Go, wretch! haste to open the gates of Hymen for whoever demands admittance; but you must never presume to enter the temple yourself: you would bring to the altar only unavailing vows: your God can no longer admit them, since he is prohibited by human laws!"

Oh! what a material difference it would make, if I were allowed to resume the dignity of my nature in some

other profession, though deemed less honourable than that in which I am now placed! Then, perhaps, the happy Dolerval would not so easily have carried off the prize! I would have ventured to have disputed it with him—yes, I would have disputed it with him, or with the most amiable man upon earth:—the most amiable! but who better deserves that name, than the man who possesses the greatest portion of sensibility? Who could have more ardently loved and adored her than I? . . . . . Oh happiness! oh bliss supreme! she might have become my wife! she might have loved me! I might have been able to obtain her!—Obtain her?—avaunt the idea! it is dreadful—it is insupportable—it kindles a devouring flame in my bosom—my feverish blood boils in my veins—

I feel my heart torn with anguish —  
my soul overwhelmed with despair . . . .  
But, what noise, what tumult assails  
my ears? — The rage of the tempest is  
let loose — the forked lightning fur-  
rows the dark concave of heaven —  
the loud-roaring thunder breaks the  
still silence of night! — Await, thou  
avenging God! await! I haste to meet  
thy bolt — I haste — and may it in-  
stantly strike me to annihilation!

Four o' clock in the morning.

How came I to interrupt my letter?  
what unknown power conveyed me to  
the arbour where I just now found my-  
self? what an oppressive sleep over-  
came me there! what strange dreams  
haunted my imagination! what a situ-

ation was that from which I have just emerged! — Let's see — let me read what I had written — “tempest! lightning! thunder!” — alas! on awaking, all nature was calm and serene: — the tempest must have raged only in my own bosom.

Ah! in pity, remove from my sight this young woman whose presence gives me both pleasure and pain, — whose voice soothes and torments me, — whose looks attract and inflame me, — this dangerous woman, in short, whose every word sinks deep into my remembrance, — whose every gesture I applaud, — whose every motion I admire, — and whose every motion, every gesture, every word, carries an irresistible charm that fascinates all my senses! — Let her be removed from my sight!



let her be taken away! — let her be torn from me! it is full time — if it is not already too late!

— Into your hands, Madam, I surrender her: — it is now your turn to afford her protection. — Even her personal safety requires that you should be informed of the cruel persecutions she has already undergone in such early youth: and when the humiliating confession of my own wretched condition escapes me, can she refuse to pardon me for revealing the secret of her misfortunes, which are totally exempt from shame or disgrace? — I have not the smallest doubt on the subject: to entertain a doubt, would be an unpardonable crime. — There exist, Madam — would you believe it? — there exist certain monsters who are capable of

hating this accomplished master-piece of nature and education! Be it your task to defend Juliette from their rage: console her for their injustice, which will find no imitators. Juliette! did I say?—no, she is not Juliette: she is not the niece of the humble Sévin. Heaven must have intended that she should be born of noble extraction; and it has not done her justice, if it did not place her on a throne.—Calm and undisturbed in my peaceful retreat, I knew not that the Almighty had taken pleasure in forming a creature so superior to all the rest of the human race. One day she came at the first dawn of the morn—but the blush of morn was less beauteous than the tints which glowed on her youthful cheek—she came, accompanied by all her graces—charming in her terror—powerful in

her distress — irresistible in her forlorn condition. She appeared — she spoke — she entreated — her every word was a command. Fool that I was! I esteemed myself happy to afford shelter to this daughter of heaven! Rash, thoughtless man! I did not reflect, that, although it may be possible to resist Nature when her voice alone is heard, she becomes irresistible when she has strengthened her own power by the supreme power of beauty.

How dearly have I paid for this mistaken confidence! and yet, such is my folly, that, notwithstanding all I have suffered — notwithstanding all I am still doomed to suffer — there is no misfortune which I would more dread than that of relapsing into my former indifference. I have successively and

collectively felt, in their full force, all those pleasing and painful sensations which can be excited in the human heart by that passion which ever reigns paramount over all the host of subordinate passions that follow in its train. I have experienced the first rising tumults of love in my bosom — its modest confusion — its timid rêveries — its melting languor — its courageous self-denial — its virtuous sacrifices. I have tasted the painful pleasure of its struggles — the charming delusion of its hopes — the rapid enchantment of its delirium. — Alas! I have not always been able to resist its powerful energy, its ardent desires, its guilty projects. And, for my greater torment, I have felt the influence of cruel jealousy, which, like a corroding vulture, preyed upon my heart — and, though a hun-

dred times subdued, has proved as often victorious. Ah! Dolerval! ah, my friend! pardon me:— you may safely do it— you ought to do it—'tis no difficult task for a successful rival to show his clemency. Happy Dolerval! you, who possess sufficient merit to please her, are worthy to obtain her. Let her be for ever yours! you will render her happy—and that is the only pleasure I am permitted to look to:— my only real consolation arises from the hope of seeing her completely blest.

Tell her, Madam . . . . . No! tell her nothing at all— but show her this letter—I request you will show it to her. Alas! when you read it, I shall be alone in the wide world— absolutely alone! Her presence will no longer

adorn my humble abode:—I shall have lost her—for ever lost her!—The unfortunate Sévin will be, to her, as one numbered with the dead.—Ah! Juliette! retain at least some memorial of me—accept this testimony of your own power and of my weakness:—deign to accept and preserve it. If it betrays an unfortunate passion which ought never to have been revealed to you,—you will also find in it a testimony of that profound respect from which I have never swerved in your presence—of that truly religious veneration with which your superior virtues never ceased to impress me, even in opposition to the powerful influence of your charms.

I, meanwhile, after the lenient hand of time shall have poured balm into



the wounds of my heart — will indulge the sweetest, fondest remembrance : — I will repair to that garden where I have seen her take a pleasure in tending the shrubs and flowers — dextrous as the Graces — light as young Zephyr. My foot shall tread in the print of her steps — my care shall be employed in perpetuating those flowers which she has cultivated. Of my birds, the one that she honoured with her preference — the same that has since been my favourite — shall be taught to repeat her name. Oft will I sit by that instrument whose vocal strings were awaked into harmony divine by the rapid and masterly touch of her fingers : there, with attentive ear, I'll endeavour to catch the floating sounds of her enchanting voice : — but never, never will I dare to profane by a single look

the sanctuary where she passed her peaceful nights.

Thus, in the deep solitude of my retreat, every thing will still remind me of Juliette ; nor shall her adored image be effaced from my remembrance, till life shall be no more.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, September 10.

HOW poignantly I feel your new afflictions, my dear Dorothy! — how I regret that I cannot fly to Paris to afford you every consolation in my power! But my mother's hatred, and the savage barbarity of her son, have for ever separated me from my sister: — of all the misfortunes which their injustice has entailed on me, this is the most cruel, and I every day more sensibly feel it. How completely wretched must I myself be, when every individual in whose welfare I take an interest, is involved in misfortune! This woman, whose every day, every hour, is marked by

some beneficent deed,—whose greatest pleasure is to seek out the 'unfortunate, and administer consolation to them,—whose thoughts seem entirely engrossed with the means of diffusing happiness on all around her,—who studies incessantly to afford me fresh proofs of her tender friendship — well! fate continues with unwearied perseverance to put her fortitude to the severest trials! — and her brother . . . . . it appears as if he were never more to return!

You may perhaps recollect, that, during the first days of my residence here, I was surprised that Madame D'Etioules did not, in the most distant manner, attempt to question me respecting my secrets, which were partly revealed in my uncle's letter. Since that time I have reflected that this con-

duct may on her part be a necessary instance of discretion — a delicacy which circumstances in some measure compel her to observe: — for, in fact, how can she with propriety expect that I should freely unbosom myself to her, while she cannot on the other hand honour me with her unlimited confidence? The world at large think she is still a widow; and she herself continues to leave me in the dark respecting her second marriage. I do not intend either to surprise her into a disclosure of her secret, or to extort it by importunity: but since she with-holds from me that mark of her confidence, I presume she is no doubt obliged to observe such mysterious secrecy. In the mean time, however, I am thus deprived of my only remaining consolation — that of seeing what her brother writes con-

cerning me in those letters which regularly come from him by every post. It must certainly be from this circumstance alone, that I find my days drag heavily on in the society of this woman, engaging as she is in every other respect.

But, exclusive of this, have I not another source of affliction? My uncle's indisposition still continues. His grief on our separation has thrown him into a deep and languid melancholy, from which time alone can recover him. We send every morning to make inquiries concerning him; my amiable friend pays him a visit every evening, and I with sad anxiety wait her return, to learn particulars. You are well aware that I cannot with propriety vi-



fit him myself — I am never to see him again — poor Father Sévin!

When I see, Dorothy — when I see misfortune thus pursue every individual who has any regard for me, I often say to myself in the bitterness of my heart — though indeed without sufficient foundation — that the generous Bovile might perhaps not have met with his untimely fate, if he had not taken too deep an interest in my welfare. I accuse myself of having extended to him the sinister influence of my unlucky star: — I then tremble lest Madame D'Etiolles — charming and kind as she is — should one day have reason to repent of having ever been acquainted with me. Oh! my God! if any misfortune were to befall her brother! —

Adieu, Dorothy! my mind is clouded with the most gloomy ideas, which I forbear to describe, as they could only add to the weight of your afflictions.—  
Adieu!

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, October 2.

CONGRATULATE your sister, my dear Dorothy! He has been here these ten days! Lament my misfortune nevertheless — for to-morrow he is to set out again.

How enchantingly have passed those happy days! what an effect have our passions in lengthening or shortening the duration of time! In his absence, every hour appeared an age:— in his company, ten days were but as a moment.

But how can I attempt to describe to

you the charm which accompanied our employments, our relaxations, our conversations, and even his silence? How expressive is his silence! how attentive he is to me — and how tender in his attentions! But at the same time what a respectful reserve prevails in his discourse! what delicacy in his manner! Would you believe, that, since his return, he has never once ventured to say a single word to me on the score of love, though it is evidently in full possession of his heart? — It is true, indeed, that his sister . . . . . how he idolises her! and how he is beloved by her in turn! How warmly they both seem attached to me! She cannot exist without me — she never quits my company. He, on the other hand, is no sooner absent for a moment from his Eleonora, than he runs in search of her.

You see, Dorothy, that we are almost inseparable; — so that I sometimes doubt whether Madame D'Etioles is not even more tenderly attached to me than to her brother, — and whether he does not entertain a greater degree of friendship for her than of love for me. As to him, however, I have some reason to think that he would not always so eagerly seek his sister's company, were it not that he well knows a certain person is constantly with her. More than once have I overheard him — when hastily entering the house, quite warm and fatigued — call out, "Picard! where is Mademoiselle . . . . .?" then suddenly checking himself . . . . . "Where is Madame D'Etioles? I beg you will tell me where I can find her."

It ought ever to be an enchanting

spectacle, to behold the tender union which prevails between these two relatives, both equally alive to the first and dearest affections of nature. Nevertheless it has often thrown me into the deepest affliction, by adding a tenfold portion of bitterness to the regret I feel for my eternal separation from my dear Dorothy. Often, by an unhappy concatenation of ideas, it excites in my bosom confused sensations of horror and affright, when I reflect on . . . . . Shall I never be able to banish the dreadful remembrance? shall I never be able entirely to forget the cruel barbarian?

But let us divert our eyes from the frightful picture: let us direct our attention to this interesting pair, who exhibit so perfect a model of fraternal



love. How worthy he is of inspiring those tender sentiments which he experiences from her ! captivating youth ! — and how justly is she entitled to his affection ! she, who, by her example still more than her instructions, has called forth into action the numerous good qualities which have fallen to the lot of her brother !

This adorable woman cannot fail of always appearing to greater advantage, the longer and better she is known. Whoever happens occasionally to enjoy her company, must no doubt remain enchanted with her accomplishments and her attractions : but in the happiness of a more intimate connection, it is the amiable qualities of her heart that will attract the principal attention : — her heart ! it possesses

charms a thousand times superior even to those of her person. And then her mind, so cultivated, endowed besides with so many native graces — her happy disposition — that sweet serenity of temper which her long afflictions have been unable to ruffle — to what can I compare them, unless to the excellent character, the amiable disposition, and the charming temper of her brother and her pupil?

Do you think he does not also equal her in the endowments of the heart? — But, Dorothy, to-morrow is the day appointed for his departure!

He is distracted at the idea — yes, I can plainly see that he is! Nevertheless he quits me! he offers this violence to his feelings! and from what motive? —

No other than that of putting a period to his sister's anxiety — or perhaps even of barely supporting her drooping spirits by the phantoms of hope.

And shall I tell you to what lengths he carries the attentions of friendship? Know then, Dorothy, that he has brought down a physician from Paris, for the express purpose of prescribing for my unfortunate uncle. I am informed, however, that Father Sévin is not in danger. But he requires very delicate management; and perhaps, after a languid existence of several years, the kind of melancholy with which he is affected may degenerate into a consumption, if timely precaution be not taken to prevent it. Poor Father Sévin! why was he doomed ever to become acquainted with me? or

rather why was he thrust into a profession which is perhaps wholly unfit for a man of sensibility? — Poor Father Sévin!

His young friend pays him, every morning and evening, a long visit. He is always melancholy when he returns from the presbytery. I esteem him the more for his solicitude and his sympathy, in both of which I sincerely participate.

Fortunately I see him labouring under a load of anxiety from a different cause. I say “fortunately” — because that extreme reserve in his conversation, which I have commended in a former part of this letter, — and which cannot but affect me very much, —

EMILY DE VARMONT.

would cause me a certain degree of uneasiness, if I did not plainly perceive that his constrained silence costs him many severe internal struggles. Sometimes, after a pause of several minutes spent in rêverie and irresolution, he is suddenly hurried away by an involuntary transport, and seems on the point of confessing to me his hopes or fears. But a single gesture, a word, a look from Madame D'Etioules immediately represses his impetuosity: — so powerful an ascendancy has she over him! Madame D'Etioules, indeed, seems to possess much greater influence over him than I, and to hold in her hand, as it were, the heart and soul of the young man, who shows himself so docile and submissive to her guidance, even in his most lively emotions.

But, to-morrow is the day appointed  
for his departure! To-morrow — to-  
morrow we must bid each other a me-  
lancholy adieu.



## EMILY to DOROTHY.

October 3, noon.

OH! his adieux! I did not foresee a circumstance which was to render them much more affecting.

He was on the point of setting out on his journey, and, with a countenance expressive of deep dejection, was quitting us. — I, meanwhile — my voice faltering, my heart ready to burst with sighs, my eyes bathed with tears — had hardly ventured to breathe my wishes for his speedy return. — Suddenly he stopped short, ran towards us, and fell on his knees at my feet. — His sister attempting to check his trans-

port — “No! no!” cried he: “I have already suffered too much from this cruel silence! I can no longer endure it!” Then addressing me, “I am wretched,” said he, “in the extreme! The love with which I burn for you — that love so tender, so pure, so honourable — does not affect you! You persist in remaining unknown to us, and would still have us to consider you as Juliette, the niece of Father Sévin. But do you, my dear Eleonora, extort from her a confession of her secret. Banish that delicacy which has hitherto withheld you, and relieve me from my present state of cruel uncertainty. Begin by imparting to her all your own secrets — reveal them to her for my sake.”

Madame D’Etioules was about to

Speak: but I hastily anticipated her words. "Dear Madam," said I, "it would no doubt be highly flattering to me to be honoured with your secrets; and I should be happy that you thought me worthy of such confidence: but let me, in the first instance, premise that such conduct on your part can never induce me to reveal my own secrets. You have long possessed my entire confidence: and if I have hitherto forbore to give you that proof of it, it is only because I am unfortunately condemned to remain for ever silent on the subject in question."

"My dear Juliette," replied she, "I shall not offer any apologies in justification of the silence I have hitherto preserved: I leave it to yourself to judge of its motives. I am now prepared to

make a full disclosure: for there no longer seems to exist any reason why I should henceforward deprive myself of the consolations to be received from such a friend as you." After this preface she immediately informed me of what she thought I did not already know — her second marriage and her husband's imprisonment, — adding "I am not at liberty to reveal any further particulars at present: I must not disclose either my husband's name, or the unfortunate affair which obliges him to live incognito: because these are secrets which belong to him alone." Then addressing her brother, "Would he have intrusted them to you, Dolival, if he had thought you would make no scruple of revealing them to the woman you love? You need not repeat to me that dangerous argument that this

young lady is worthy of your entire confidence: for where is the lover who will not say the same thing of the woman on whom he has fixed his affections? Thus the principle, though in itself undeniable, would be overthrown by the crowd of exceptions; and the secrets of friendship would be sacrificed to the indiscretions of love. I have a thousand times told you, Doloral — and I have myself, by sad experience, lately proved the truth of the maxim, — that if we wish steadily to persevere in the performance of a painful duty, we must never venture to reason or compound with it.”

During the latter part of this discourse her brother seemed wrapt in deep abstraction, unconscious of what she said: — his affliction is not to be

described. — “We shall never,” cried he in the accent of grief, — “we shall never become acquainted with the particulars of her fate ! I shall never be able to obtain her ! And that happy union, the hope of which supported . . . . .”

“You see,” interrupted Madame D’Etioules, clasping me in her arms — “You see how ardently he loves you. By a single word you can alleviate my misfortunes, as I should then have the pleasure of seeing my brother’s happiness begun. — What ! can you not at least do as I have done, — disclose so much of your history as concerns yourself alone, and suppress that part which solely relates to . . . . . your enemies, since we are given to understand that it is possible you should have enemies ?”



Well, Dorothy! whether it was that Madame D'Etiolles' remarks shed a ray of hope on my mind, or that I could not endure to behold Monsieur Dolerval's agitation, I was no longer able to repress the effusions of my soul, — but, "However fortunate," said I, "you may deem that union of which you speak, I know — so well am I acquainted with your heart — that you could never relish the sweets of it, while your sister continued to groan under the weight of affliction. Go, Dolerval! exert your every effort to restore to her arms the husband of her affections! Haste to bring him back! I shall then see . . . . . I shall then disclose to you the chief part of my misfortunes: I shall reveal my name, if possible: and then you shall judge what

means may be sufficient to overcome the numerous obstacles . . . . .”

The impatient effervescence of his joy did not allow me to conclude :— he loaded me with a profusion of the most tender thanks — he affectionately embraced his sister — and immediately requested my permission to write to me from Paris.

“ Directly ? — by no means !”

“ Well then, one single letter, when I have obtained the enlargement of your future brother-in-law.”

“ Let the happy intelligence be directed to me ! Mine be the inexpressible satisfaction of communicating it to my dear friend ! — And you, Do-

lerval, endeavour to be here as soon as your letter."

Scarcely had I uttered these words, when Madame D'Etioules tenderly embraced me, and Dolerval shed tears of joy on my hand which his sister had put into his. Meanwhile the hour of his departure approached — twenty times he attempted to go — as often he returned : — at length he tore himself away : and now I remain alone with Madame D'Etioules.

## DOLERVAL to MURVILLE.

Paris, November 21.

AT length, Murville, I begin to flatter myself with the expectation that my long absence will speedily be at an end. I hope I shall soon be at liberty to inform you of the urgent motives and the fortunate success of this journey which seems to give you so much uneasiness. As to my several months' silence, of which you complain, I confess I thought it necessary to adopt the painful resolution of not writing to you until I should no longer have any thing to fear either from my own indiscretion or from your counsels; — you had al-

ready rendered me guilty of so gross an insult to the supposed niece of Father Sévin.

At length the happy, the long-wished-for hour is come, when I can, even with you, safely indulge in the effusions of my joy. That adorable woman to whom you were unwilling to render justice, was not Father Sévin's niece, — in whatever sense you choose to understand the term. She has now lived three months with my sister: during three months her company and conversation have been Madame D'Etioles' only comfort. — As to myself, I shall in all probability very soon return to Tours: and then I shall . . . . But tell me, Murville, can't you contrive, towards the end of next week, to spare

a few days from the duties of your station? Can't you pay our dear Eleonora a visit? Surely you will not let slip the opportunity of being one of the happiest party upon earth? Ah! you may then boast of having, for your sister-in-law, one of the most charming women in the universe! See! behold! I send you her picture, which I have drawn from memory alone. It is, no doubt, a very imperfect sketch: nevertheless, my greatest pleasure is to multiply copies of it. Hitherto I have produced only three: yet I am willing to give you one of them. But in sending it to you, my dear brother, it is a very serious sacrifice I make, through friendship for you.

Adieu, Murville! You will cer-

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tainly not fail to come to my wedding ?  
You will witness the happiness of your  
brother ; and you will find — yes,  
every thing tells me that you will find  
my sister elate with joy. Adieu !

## MURVILLE to VARMONT.

Brest, November 25, midnight.

I THOUGHT, Varmont, that it was you who had so dexterously carried off Mademoiselle Terville; and I was seriously vexed at the idea. You, on the other hand, thought that I still kept her concealed; and you were angry with me for the supposed detention of your Dulcinea. But while both you and I vainly regretted the loss of the damsel, a third person enjoyed the prize at our expense. I therefore pardon you all the past, since you do not possess her: and you must equally pardon me, since I have not as yet obtained possession of the fair fugitive.

Would you advise me to go and carry her off? Her unlucky stars have thrown her into the hands of one of those modern Celadons, who, if they happen to fall in with a girl deserving of any attention, make nothing of her — nothing but their wife! She would undoubtedly find herself a thousand times happier in being the mistress of an accomplished young fellow like me! There is, however, one circumstance which embarrasses and restrains me: — the amorous Celadon in question is a person for whom I am bound to entertain some regard. But, on second thoughts, that is only an additional reason why I should prevent him from committing so gross a folly. Very well! But then if I play him a trick, and that he should take it very much to heart? . . . Pooh! pooh! he can never

be so romantic as to break his heart in consequence. Nevertheless, he is of so good and friendly a disposition himself, that it would be cruel to give him the slightest uneasiness. Granted! but then how cruelly must I suffer in the mean time!—I am much perplexed, and uncertain which way to determine. Tell me then, Varmont—you, who have heretofore been my oracle—how would you act in my situation? Mind, Varmont—in *my* situation, I say: mistake me not—I do not mean in *yours*.

I know, Varmont, that in your situation you would be less irresolute and less scrupulous than I am: I therefore take the prudent precaution of not discovering to you the place of the fair one's concealment: for if I should finally conclude to let her remain there

unmolested, I am determined that you also, my dear friend, shall let her alone. And, on the other hand, if I carry her off, I promise you that I shall take good care to keep her, this time.

Adieu, Varmont! I am yours sincerely, and without any rancour; and I hope to meet a similar return of friendship on your part.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, December 7, noon.

AT length, Dorothy, the long-wished-for letter is come. He himself is to arrive to-night. He restores his beloved Eleonora to life — he brings back her adored husband to her arms. Charming woman! then her sorrows are at an end! How can I find words to express her joy and mine? how collect sufficient strength to bear the united transports of my own happiness and that of so dear a friend? Adieu, Dorothy! I quit you for a while, to go converse with her respecting the two travellers who are so impatiently expected.



Eleven at night.

Oh! Dorothy! Dorothy! what a cruel reverse! I am now convinced — I can no longer doubt, that heaven sent me into the world for no other purpose than that of pouring on my head the whole torrent of its wrath, and rendering me the plague and torment of all who should have the misfortune to be acquainted with me.

Madame D'Etioules measured the time by her own impatience ; and, to me as well as to her, the evening seemed as if it would never have an end. At length the rattling of wheels at the door threw us both into lively emotion, and prepared us for the pleasure of receiving the two gentlemen. The first

who entered was that unknown person whose speedy return I had so ardently wished for. He entered without observing me — his whole attention being fixed on his wife, whom he immediately clasped in his arms. But alas! I observed *him* — I too plainly saw him — his image is still present to my view. I rivetted my eyes on him; — not that a long examination was necessary to recognise his features — but the more attentively I viewed him, the more I was tempted to doubt whether I was really awake — whether it was not a dear but now unwelcome phantom that came to delude my sight — whether this error of my senses was not the effect of a dream at once pleasing and painful. He spoke to Madame D'Etioles — I heard the voice of that brother-in-law whose deliverance had been

effected by the youth who expected to obtain my hand. I attentively listened, and would fain have persuaded myself that my ears deceived me. But there was no room for doubt: I too plainly distinguished the pleasing sound of his voice — though, at this moment, his every word was a dagger to my soul. In short, Dorothy, this husband, so dear to Madame D'Etioules, is no other than mine — no other than the too generous, the unfortunate Bovile!

His deliverer was on his knees before me: and at the moment when he expected to have solely entertained me with his hopes, I forced him to express his anxious uneasiness. “Can you be so much surprised at the ardor of their affection,” said he, “as to suffer it to engross your whole attention? Will

you not deign, Madam, to bestow a look upon me?"

Scarcely had he thus expressed his anxiety, when I gave him cause for more serious alarm. My strength suddenly failed me, and I was sinking to the floor, if he had not caught me in his arms, and supported me. His cries attracted the attention of his sister and his brother-in-law. "Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Bovile, "it is . . . . . it is the excess of joy!"

I remained for a few moments in that kind of swoon which deprives us of all our faculties except that of hearing. Madame D'Etioules and her brother lavished all their care and attention on me: Bovile was equally attentive: but in giving me assistance, his extreme fur-

prise several times extorted from him a repetition of that exclamation, — to which however he gave a different turn, as he had done in the first instance — “Yes! it is . . . . . it is the excess of joy!” — “May I venture to flatter myself with the pleasing idea?” asked Dolerval. — Madame D’Etioles assured him that it could be nothing else.

“And is this,” added Bovile, “the young lady who was the constant subject of your conversation during our journey?”

The young man having answered in the affirmative —

“And you are wholly ignorant of her birth and family?” said Bovile.

"You are absolutely unacquainted with her history?"

"Precisely as I have told you," replied Dolerval. "But she shall soon speak for herself:—we shall be united:—I expect the reward due to my faithful and constant affection:—and then, what lover upon earth so happy as I?—See! even in her present condition, how beautiful! how captivating!—Ah! there! there! she recovers!"

At this moment in fact I was beginning to recover the use of my faculties; when my unfortunate benefactor, to whom the imminence of the threatening danger restored all his presence of mind, seized my hand; and gently striking it, as if simply to hasten my re-



covery, but, no doubt, with the additional view of attracting my notice, and inducing me to pay the strictest attention to his words, as well as to the critical situation in which we were both involved — “Dolerval,” said he, raising his voice, “are you sure that you have not too fondly indulged a hope which was void of foundation? Since the lady has so long avoided disclosing to you a secret of that nature, she most probably had very cogent reasons for observing silence on the subject. And can you be certain that circumstances will yet permit her to explain matters so soon as you wish?”

“Yes!” replied the youth, “I have her own word for it: and can any thing be more sacred with her than her promise?”

At this remark, unable to repress my emotions, I exclaimed, "Ah Dolerval ! what is this I hear? Are you aware how far that promise might lead me?" Then, affected with the idea of the misfortunes which threatened Madame D'Etioles, and impelled by sentiments of commiseration for her, I rushed into her arms, and, "Dear Madam," said I, "let me warn you to forbear inquiring into my history: it is dreadful to relate. I am not the only person deserving of pity, nor am I the most to be pitied." — I would perhaps have continued — perhaps have betrayed my secret: but a significant look from Bovile seemed to entreat that I would be silent for the sake of his new bride: and I perceived that I must, in tenderness for her feelings, conceal from her knowledge the real cause of my affliction.

Meanwhile, Dorothy, picture to yourself my situation — with Bovile before my eyes — Bovile, whose supposed tragical death I had deplored ! If I may venture to trust to appearances, — and especially to the virtuous character of my husband, who is certainly incapable of an act of perfidy, — the lover of Madame D'Etioules must have adored her long before he was acquainted with me. When, for the purpose of rescuing me from the slavery of a cloister, he conducted me to the altar, the generous man sacrificed not only his fortune for my sake, but also his most tender affections, to which the advanced age of Monsieur D'Etioules still left a reasonable hope. — I felt myself powerfully impelled to fall on my knees before him, and in that humble posture to testify the gratitude and admiration ex-

cited in my bosom by his disinterested conduct. But in what a place, in what circumstances, did I meet him again! How many witnesses by my side! witnesses whom I both loved and dreaded — and with whom there was no alternative but that of deceiving them, or cruelly wounding them to the heart, and for ever destroying the peace and happiness of their lives. Was ever unfortunate woman placed in a more critical, a more deplorable situation than I? To suffer the slightest word to escape, expressive of my respectful attachment to Bovile, would have at once astonished and confounded both the sister and the brother. Nevertheless, to favour Madame D'Etiolles' error, on which her happiness depended, must I not in some measure deceive and betray Dolerval? Alas! must I not still continue to feed

his hopes — those flattering hopes, in which I had myself participated, but which now can never be realised? On the other hand, can I quietly listen to his declarations of love, without offending my husband, who hears every word? — “My husband! — But is he mine, if he is the husband of Madame D’Eti-oles? No doubt he has forfeited all claim to Emily — no doubt he has renounced it! And nevertheless Emily becomes guilty of a crime, if her heart continues to entertain a secret attachment to another object! — Ah! Dolerval! Dolerval! then I never can be yours!”

Such were the afflicting ideas that racked my soul, whose inward workings each moment betrayed themselves in my countenance by evident symp-

toms, which the fond youth observed with the utmost anxiety. I calmed his uneasiness however by an officious falsehood: — I told him — yes I dared to tell him, that my agitation was wholly to be attributed to the painful struggle I naturally experienced at the approach of the time when I was to reveal to him all the horrors of my fate. — But Bovile, more unfortunate in this instance than I, — Bovile could not allege any colourable excuse for his grief. His grief, did I say? He was even obliged — while his soul was racked with the most cruel anxiety — while his heart was a prey to dark despair — he was obliged to feign all the transports of joy. He did not, however, throughout the whole of the scene, exhibit that kind of courage which his situation required: his countenance fre-



quently changed — his voice faltered — he fell into gloomy rêveries. His condition was not unobserved by Madame D'Etiolles, in whose bosom it excited at first only a tender sollicitude which had him alone for its object. "Take patience," said she — "take courage, my dear! since they have restored you your liberty, no doubt they will restore your honour likewise."

But, notwithstanding her soothing consolations — notwithstanding the utmost efforts on his own part — she soon saw him relapse into a total absence of thought. The fond bride then began to be alarmed and afflicted on her own account. "What!" said she — "are you more unfortunate now, than you were on your return from Cadiz? or am I become less dear to you?"

“Ah!” replied he, “if it were possible that I could live without loving you, I should perhaps think myself less . . . . . think myself sufficiently happy.”

Madame D’Etioles was still more alarmed by this answer, which her husband refused to explain, but whose real meaning I believe I perfectly comprehended.

In short, Dorothy, there would be no end, were I to attempt describing to you all the distresses of that night—a night of the greatest affliction I ever experienced in my whole life. Bovile seemed desirous of an opportunity of conversing with me in private: I too was equally desirous that he should assist me with his advice to guide my

conduct in my present critical situation. But it was impossible : for Madame D'Etiolles — uneasy and calm by turns — alternately pleased and dejected — did not for one moment quit her husband's company ; while, on the other hand, Dolerval constantly sat close by my side : and though at first he had indulged in all the transports of the most lively hope, at length I thought I could perceive that he viewed me with inward anxiety. — Could my refusal to reveal my secrets have been sufficient cause for his deep chagrin ? or am I to suppose that he affected to show himself hurt and uneasy, in order to extort a confession from me ? However that may be, he concluded by earnestly pressing me to come to an explanation : — but he did it in a tone that be-

trayed a certain mistrust, far from congenial with real love, which, in my opinion, cannot for a moment exist unless where it is founded on the most perfect esteem. — And this moment, again, when I was retiring to my apartment, “Why,” said he with impetuosity, “should that disclosure which you still continue to postpone — why should it be a painful task? Innocence, persecuted and calumniated, only appears more engaging. We have no reason to blush for our misfortunes; ’tis vice alone that we need be ashamed of: — though, let me say, that, if vice could for a moment have sullied a breast like yours, I could never again believe in the existence of virtue.”

To these remarks, Dorothy, I made

no answer, but contented myself with punishing by my silence his ill-disguised doubts. I immediately withdrew to my chamber, where I never more expect to taste the sweets of calm repose.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

8th December, fix in the evening.

THIS morning I was obliged to make my appearance at the breakfast hour. Madame D'Etiolles did not seem perfectly easy in her mind: Bovile appeared very pensive; and Dolerval suddenly renewed his sollicitations, but with an earnestness which sensibly affected me: for his language and manner displayed all that respectful delicacy, which I was hurt to observe wanting in some parts of his behaviour yesterday. This circumstance, however, was, in reality, only an additional source of affliction to your unfortunate sister. How highly condemnable must



that passion be, which makes me take a pleasure in the sincere homage of this young man, whom I am obliged to deceive by false promises ! How cruel on my part to persevere in my endeavours to please the man whom I am no longer at liberty to love ! Distracted with these ideas, I was on the point of disclosing the fatal secret, when Bovile, with a view, probably, to confirm me in my former resolution to the contrary, suddenly interposed, by thus addressing Madame D'Etioules — “ Well ! I shall now, according to our agreement, relate to your friend such part of my adventures as she is yet ignorant of.”

Immediately he informed me that his name was Bovile ; — that having in the year 1776, for the first time, seen Mademoiselle de Sancerre (now Madame D'E-

tioles) he was deeply smitten with her charms ; — that being unable to obtain her from her parents, he had, in his grief for the disappointment, gone to sea ; — that a celebrated marine commander, Monsieur Varmont, had commissioned, protected, and promoted him in the royal navy ; — that, after the death of his patron, finding his youngest daughter at Paris in danger of being buried for life in a convent, he had married her.

Here, Dorothy, I could not refrain from interrupting his rapid recital. “ Ah ! Sir,” said I, “ what esteem, what gratitude must the young lady entertain for you ! ”

“ She is no longer in existence,” replied Bovile.

“ No longer in existence? — No ! certainly she cannot be, since you have married Madame D’Etioules.”

He then related how his Emily had perished by the blowing up of the vessel in which she was embarked ; — that, in a few days after, his perfidious colleagues had basely abandoned him in a naval action against the English in the latitude of the Azores. “ My frigate,” added he, “ was sunk to the bottom ; — I swam on the surface of the abyss ; and in that forlorn state I still entertained hopes. Chance favoured my efforts : I was thrown upon a rock, where I lived three days upon wild herbs and shell-fish. During the course of the third day I was taken up by a Spanish vessel on her return from Tercera to Cadiz.—Too powerfully convinced of the

injustice of mankind, who are ever prompt to condemn the unfortunate, I concealed my real name. Fate, nevertheless, seemed disposed in the present instance to grant me a compensation for all my former calamities : — on my arrival at Cadiz, I received a letter from Dolerval, informing me that his sister was now free to make a new choice. I immediately repaired to her house, in quest of an asylum — and of my recompense. But how to succeed in the latter point, was the question — how to contract a second marriage. Of Emily's death there was a moral certainty : but there existed no legal proof that could ascertain the fact ; and, under such circumstances, the surviving partner is by our laws forbid to enter anew into the matrimonial state. Thus perplexed, thus debarred from the object of my

wishes, I bethought myself of a mode by which I might ensure my own happiness, without injuring any body else, and which did not seem likely to be attended with any inconvenience. The lady was pleased with the idea: we approached the altar with confidence; and I married her under the fictitious name which my misfortunes had obliged me to assume. It was during the night of....”

“Of the sixth of August!” cried I. — “I shall long remember that night — for — for, Madame D’Etiolles has often mentioned to me the particular time.”

“I own,” replied that lady, pressing my hand in hers, — “I own that I have often recalled the remembrance of that

event with a mixture of pleasure and pain. — You see how dangerous it is to compromise with our duty. On that occasion I ventured to do it for the first time in my life: and now I am punished for it, even in the midst of the most perfect connubial bliss. The cup of happiness is embittered by an alarming apprehension — a groundless one, no doubt — but eternally present to my mind. Alas! can it be a presentiment . . . . ?”

“ I think I comprehend your meaning,” said I, interrupting her: “ you are alarmed lest his former wife, rescued from destruction by some miracle, should one day make her appearance, and . . . . ”

“ And nought would then remain for



me but death!" cried she in a tone of the deepest affliction.

"'Tis impossible!" replied her brother, assuming an air of entire conviction, well calculated to carry consolation to his sister's bosom.

"Impossible," said Bovile, casting on me a supplicating look.

Even I myself, Dorothy, moved with terror and compassion, joined in the assertion, and said "'Tis impossible!"

"And now," continued Bovile, completely relieved from his apprehensions, — "now let me inform you of the plan I had laid down, and of the measures which I have at present in contempla-

tion. — I was determined to announce to the world that I was still living, and once more to face my enemies, whenever a more favourable turn of affairs should allow me to solicit a revision of the iniquitous sentence which has so unjustly branded my memory with disgrace. After that, it was my intention to devote myself entirely to my bride, and, under the fictitious name which had enabled me to make her mine, to retire with her to some obscure village, there to spend the remainder of my life with her. Five days had hardly elapsed from the time of our union, when a report prevailed, that, by some court intrigue, Monsieur \*\*\*\*, the minister of the marine, and my personal enemy, was turned out of office. I immediately hastened to Paris: but the intelligence was unfounded. — Meantime,

however, some base dependent of my powerful enemy informed him of the existence of Bovile, and of my arrival in town: and in the middle of the ensuing night, I was dragged from my bed, and plunged into that dark abyss, the hideous receptacle of the victims of ministerial vengeance. — You are already acquainted with what remains to be told, except perhaps one circumstance — that my wife is now entering on the fifth month of her pregnancy.”

This last remark of Bovile’s gave infinite pleasure to Dolerval. “Now,” said he to his sister, “now the bonds of your happy union are become more sacred, and more dear, if possible.

More sacred and more dear! — yes! the remark was just: and Bovile’s mo-

tive, in imparting that secret, was probably no other than to convince me, that, in pity to a mother as well as a bride, I must suffer the dreadful mystery to remain for ever covered with an impenetrable veil. But he need not be alarmed on that score :— I shall preserve eternal silence on the subject, however painful I may find the task on many occasions. I will continue deaf to the pressing solicitations of young Dolerval : I will reject his earnest entreaties— I will endure the weight of his reproaches, — unmoved, I will see his bitter tears flow — and I will coolly contemplate his despair — happy if I can, at the expense of his life and my own, save that of his sister — my dear and generous friend — that unfortunate mother — the wife of the worthy Bovile !

Dolerval, however, who could not possibly suspect how much less wretched I should be if I were at liberty to enter into an explanation, accused me of insensibility, of selfishness, of cruelty, — and repeatedly insisted on the performance of my promise. Madame D'Etioules also united with her brother in reminding me of my engagement. Thoughtless woman! she ought to tremble lest I should not always have sufficient fortitude to conceal those secrets which she so earnestly solicits me to disclose.

At length the ungrateful youth insulted me a second time by a repetition of those cruel expressions which so severely hurt my feelings last night — “Innocence, persecuted and calumniated, only appears more engaging. Don't you understand me, Madam? or are you

determined not to understand me?" — Then he continued, as before, "We have no reason to blush for our misfortunes: 'tis vice alone that we need be ashamed of."

Fortunately he added no more: — fortunately he this day does me sufficient justice, or has sufficient respect for my feelings, to refrain from making the concluding remark — to say the best of it, an unnecessary one — which I too patiently submitted to hear, at the breaking up of our party last night.

But what can be the meaning of those words which he so uniformly repeats whenever I have worn out his patience, — and which he repeats with a certain mysterious affectation, in which I think I can discover a strange mix-



ture of threat and fear — of confidence and uneasiness — of boldness and respect? What can be their meaning? Perhaps I may yet learn it: perhaps Monsieur Dolerval may at length condescend to explain himself more clearly.

Meantime I have had a very delicate explanation with Bovile. He thought he had found a favourable opportunity to whisper me that he would go down and wait for me in the garden. He imagined he was unobserved: but I am much afraid his wife took notice of his whispering. It is true indeed, that her back was turned to us: but then she had her eyes fixed on a large pier-glass which directly fronted us; and, in the first emotions of surprise, she turned round; and it was not without much difficulty that she suppressed her

uneasiness.—In prudence I was obliged to stay near half an hour: and at the expiration of that time, fearing that Bovile's patience would be exhausted by the delay, I pretended that I had occasion to retire to my apartment, where you may naturally suppose I did not long remain.

On meeting Bovile, he in the first place begged my pardon a thousand times over for the crime of which he insisted he was guilty against his first wife. He next conjured me, in the name of that tender pity which is natural to every bosom endued with real sensibility, to suffer Madame D'Etioules to remain undeceived of her present error, which could alone save herself and the child in her womb from certain death. He then protested to me

in a most respectful tone — nor was I surprised, though I own I was somewhat embarrassed by the protestation — that, with regard to him, I might make myself perfectly easy, since the happy husband of Eleonora had forfeited all his claims to Emily. But he must have observed my cheek suffused with the deepest crimson, when he told me that he thought it a most unfortunate circumstance for me to be under a necessity of still encouraging the addresses of that amiable youth. Finally he requested me to inform him what strange concatenation of miraculous events had rescued me from destruction at Brest, and conducted me safe to Tours. — I minutely related to him every circumstance, except the black villany of my unnatural brother, on whom I could now easily take vengeance, but whom I sincere-

ly pardon, and in whose favour I each day fervently implore the Almighty, that he may in his infinite mercy turn the wretch's heart, and bring him to a sincere repentance of his crimes.

During this recital, Bovile, who attentively listened to every syllable I uttered, observed, with evident alarm, that, as Murville was the intimate friend of Varmont, Madame D'Etioules was hourly exposed to the misfortune of discovering my birth: "and Murville," added he, "is perhaps a more infamous character than you suppose: for—though it pains me to remind you of the circumstance—I must nevertheless remark, that the contagious example of your brother cannot fail of deeply infecting and corrupting every

one who has any connection with him."

He had still many questions to propose to me; and, above all, we were anxious to concert some plan for screening Madame D'Etiolles from the dangers by which she is surrounded. But Bovile perceived his brother-in-law coming towards us, and we were obliged to change the subject of our conversation. — On approaching us, Monsieur Dolerval complimented us on the hardy perseverance we showed in continuing our walk so long, notwithstanding the severity of the weather: and when we entered the 'drawing-room, Madame D'Etiolles formally observed to me that she thought I had been all this while locked up in my own apartment.

I am perfectly conscious that I ought to have retained sufficient command over myself, to endure, for the remainder of the evening, the heart-rending spectacle of the ill-disguised affliction of the brother and the sister. But pity me, Dorothy! pity me! the measure of my misfortunes already exceeds that of my fortitude. Nor will you be surprised at this, if you for a moment consider, in all its different points of view, the cruel position of your sister, in the midst of so many objects, each intimately linked with her most tender affections. Bitter indeed, to every one of the party, must be that portion of sorrow, which, in my situation—a situation each day becoming more and more cruel,—I must necessarily deal out to them. They, nevertheless, will have but the smallest part of the burthen to sustain:—’tis on the fee-



ble shoulders of Emily that the chief weight of the enormous mass will bear. Ah! while constantly obliged to conceal from one or other of them some hidden cause of sorrow, some devouring chagrin, what would become of me, if I had not the consolatory resource of unbosoming myself to you, and revealing to you the dreadful plenitude of my misery and distress?

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, December 10.

**HOW** mortifying it is to give pain to those we love, and to incur their displeasure ! Already Madame D'Etiolles begins to show less affection for her Juliette, so lately the object of her fond attachment : and the ungrateful Dolerival will, I believe, soon learn to hate me.

In his impatient fits, now become more frequent, he incessantly torments me with those sentences — to me still enigmatical — which he has a thousand times echoed in my ears : and you cannot conceive how much I feel myself

hurt by his injustice. I cannot describe what I suffer when I observe him cast a scrutinising glance of his eye at Juliette and Bovile. But when, in a moment after, he turns aside, to conceal from my view the tears which bathe his cheek, — then, Dorothy, my internal struggles are more violent, — my wretchedness is increased tenfold.

And that engaging woman — so gentle, so timid, even while agitated by the emotions of jealousy — when I see her privately steal an anxious look at Bovile and me — what is it that restrains me from rushing into her arms, clasping her to my bosom, and justifying myself by relating to her my whole history? What else could restrain me, but the dreadful certainty that I cannot satisfy her as a lover and a friend, with

out ruining her forever as a mother and a wife?

What most of all torments her and Dolerval, is to see me so frequently walking in company with Bovile. But we would not so often resort to the garden—or, rather, we would no longer resort to it at all—if they had but shown sufficient patience to let us walk there once or twice without interruption. Whenever, after repeated unsuccessful attempts, we had at length been able to slip away and meet there, Dolerval immediately followed and joined us. Yesterday, as on the day before, he began by an ironical compliment on “the invincible resolution which enabled us to brave the inclemency of the season.”—To-day his conduct is of a quite different nature:—we have several times

detected him in the very act, I might almost say, of listening to us. As soon as he sees us at a distance, he approaches us, but always contrives to let us walk before; then, when he is very near, he advances slowly and softly: but even in this case, he cannot avoid overtaking us, as we studiously slacken our pace, though without any apparent design. Thus forced to join company with us, he makes one of the party, but without uttering a single word. Perhaps he is afraid, that, if he attempted to speak, his secret vexation would break out into some unguarded expressions. He therefore contents himself with walking by my side, — regulates his steps by ours, — and thus accompanies us, until he obliges us to return to the house.

This evening, however, he suffered us to remain near an hour together, and thus afforded us an opportunity of coming to some important resolutions. The measures which we have been obliged to determine on, are, to me, very cruel and severe — much more so than I was willing to acknowledge to Bovile. I found it necessary to prevail on him — for the happiness of his Eleonora — perhaps also for that of young Dolerval — but certainly, certainly, not for my own — to conduct me, one of these mornings — without the knowledge of Madame D’Etioles or her brother — to some convent, in whatever spot he thinks most advisable. At first I had entertained a hope, that, by taking the necessary precautions for secrecy, I might, without being known, have been able to reach your convent: but



Bovile strongly represented to me the thousand unforeseen accidents which might sooner or later discover the place of my concealment: and when he spoke of the hatred which Madame Varmont bears me, I felt a secret horror, and shuddered at the idea of the still greater dangers to which I should be exposed from the cruelty of her son.—Pity your sister, my dear Dorothy! console me under this new calamity! it is not in the same solitude with you that I am to spend the remainder of my unfortunate life.

This dreadful preliminary being once settled, we hastened to make our appearance in the parlour. I was astonished that we had not been interrupted in our melancholy deliberations; but it seems that, on their part also, the bro-

ther and sister had had some business of a private and disagreeable nature to engage their attention : for, on our entrance, they hastily put up some letters they had been reading ; and I observed a considerable alteration in their countenances : — that of Dolerval, indeed, exhibited every mark of the most violent agitation.

During the course of the night they have had very long and very mysterious consultations together. I suspect — and Bovile is of the same opinion — that I was the unfortunate subject of their conversation. It is certain, that, while they whispered each other, they cast such looks at me, as almost terrified me. At supper-time, young Dolerval did indeed occasionally address his discourse to me, but not without extraor-

dinary and painful efforts on his part ; while his sister, deeply wrapt in thought, seemed hardly conscious of my presence. — It is all over, Dorothy ! I have lost their affections ! My heart, touched with tender pity, can still pardon Madame D'Etioles : but as to Dodelerval, he is utterly inexcusable.

Do not, however, imagine, Dorothy, that their present injustice to me will render me less sensible of the bitterness of the separation which is soon to take place. No ! do not once imagine it. My departure is to be followed by an eternal absence — that cruel departure will hurry me to an untimely grave ! Ah ! so much the better, since I shall thus be the sooner released from a life of suffering. But it is not that consideration which has influenced me

to take this step : — my principal object is to restore peace and happiness to those two ungrateful persons to whom my presence is now a torment. Perhaps, at no very distant day, when they hear of the generous sacrifice I have made, they may come and shed over my grave the tear of sympathy and regret.

## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, December 11, noon.

WHAT a scene ! happily, a few more such cruel trials will be sufficient to consign me to the peaceful mansions of the dead.

This morning Madame D'Etiolles received me with all those marks of friendship which were once familiar to us. I was at first surprised to find Monsieur Dolerval in her apartment at so early an hour. They were pacing the room with hasty strides ; and Dolerval, after the first compliments were passed, seeming eager to produce some letters which he had in his pocket-book, his sister stopped him, saying,

"Wait a moment: let us not be in too great a hurry: it cannot be long till your friend Bovile comes down."

In fact he soon made his appearance; and Madame D'Etioules immediately addressed him, — placing herself at the same time between Dolerval and me. — "I have impatiently waited for you," said she — "I beg you will take a seat — I beg you will give me a moment's hearing, without interruption; and I request, that both of you" — directing her discourse to her brother and me — "will do me the same favour."

"Bovile," continued she, "by what unaccountable fatality has it happened that the period of your return — a pe-



riod so ardently wished for by your wife and your friend, and which was to terminate all their sorrows — has hitherto been productive of nought but the most bitter affliction to the one and to the other? Whatever may be the hidden cause of our misfortunes, it is of the most pressing importance immediately to investigate it. I do not think we are all equally capable of much longer enduring our present situation, which is evidently more or less painful to every one of us. And since, sooner or later, an explanation must necessarily take place, you will, no doubt, — at least I hope you will — be obliged to me for the promptitude as well as the frankness with which I mean to call for it.

“Perhaps, Madam,” (addressing me)  
 “my brother had some right to expect, in consideration of his tender affection, that you should disclose to him — to him, I say, in preference to any one else — the impenetrable mystery of your misfortunes. I do not inquire whether you have actually honoured my more fortunate husband with your confidence, or why him rather than my brother or me: I content myself with requesting, that, for the general benefit of all present, you will impart your secrets to us all. ’Tis a favour which I solicit for my husband’s sake, who cannot long enjoy domestic happiness, if he sees his wife and his friend tormented with continual anxiety:— ’tis an act of justice which I demand in favour of my brother, who loves you — as,

no doubt, you well deserve — to a degree of idolatry — but who is almost driven to distraction by your frequent and mysterious conversations with Bovile. I conjure you to do it for my sake also,” continued she, taking me by the hand, and affectionately squeezing it, — “since I can no longer conceal that I am somewhat jealous of you. Finally, my dear Juliette, I conjure you for your own sake — for the sake of your character — of your virtues, which, even here under the auspices of the most respectful love and the most cordial friendship, are not secure from the attacks of what I am willing to suppose the blackest calumny.

“Brother, show the two letters. — He received them,” continued she,

“on the fifth of this month, a few moments before he set out from Paris on his return hither.”

“I do not believe one syllable of the contents,” cried Dolerval — “not a single syllable.”

“In the first place,” resumed Madame D’Etioules, “you must allow me to accuse you of the most profound dissimulation. I have often had occasion to speak to you of his elder brother Murville : but you never once gave me room even to suspect that you were acquainted with him. I can account for your silence, Juliette : and as to the writer of the other letter — Monsieur de Varmont — I hope you have not had the misfortune to . . . .”

I could hear no more, Dorothy. —

At the name of my brother, pronounced by Madame D'Etioles, I fainted away.

On recovering my senses, I observed her labouring under the most violent agitation — her brother bathed in tears — and Bovile pale with affright.

“She is acquainted with him !” exclaimed Dolerval.

“Why should the bare mention of his name, or the sight of a letter in his hand-writing, terrify her to such a degree ?” said Madame D'Etioles.

Here Bovile attempted to speak : but his voice faltered ; and he vainly in-

—listened on being put in possession of those two formidable letters.

“Read them aloud, Madam!” said I: “read them. I tremble, it is true: — but it is not for myself I tremble.”

Soon after, I observed Delerval — through pure compassion for me, I presume — putting back the letters into his pocket-book. — But I told him it was now too late to stand upon ceremony, or observe any further delicacy in the affair. — I begged to be allowed a sight of the letters: I entreated — I urged — I conjured. At length Madame D’Etiolles prevailed on him to put them into my hands. I read them myself: — yes, Dorothy, I had the courage to read them! And now my eyes



swim in darkness — my hand shakes — but, 'tis no matter! — before I relate to you the conclusion of that dreadful scene, let me send you copies of both the letters. I shall then inform you of the comments to which they gave rise — how they have remained in my possession — and what use I intend to make of them.

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*Murville to Dolervul.*

“ Brest, December 1.

“ You are an adept at the pencil, my dear brother! — a perfect adept! The miniature bears so striking a resemblance, that the very first sight of it made me almost frantic with astonishment and joy. You must know her

well, since you can draw her picture so perfectly from memory alone: but, luckily for you, I am still better acquainted with her. No doubt, she is a charming girl: but if I can believe the account I have had of her from Varmont, who has a more intimate knowledge of her than I, she must, with all her charms, be a downright monster. However, I do not give implicit credit to every thing he says: for I know that persons disappointed in love-affairs are but too apt to harbour a lasting resentment, which, in spite of their utmost efforts to conceal it, will occasionally break out, and will prompt them — if not to invent gross falsehoods — at least to exaggerate disagreeable truths. On the whole, however, making all due allowance for this and every other circumstance which might operate as a

drawback on the credibility of his letter, I think I may pretty safely venture to affirm that your intended bride is, to say the least of her, a damsel of very suspicious character.—That you should take her as the temporary companion of your vacant hours, were pardonable enough; and, in such case, I might perhaps consent, in your favour, to resign my claims to her. But to think of marrying her! I'd endure a thousand deaths rather than suffer you to take such a step:—and let me caution you to be on your guard against me; for there are no measures which I would hesitate to attempt with a view to rescue you from such a fatal connection.

“ P. S. On second thoughts, I send you the last letter I received from Varmont. You will see what an account

he gives of the amiable girl whom you intend to honour with your hand. The pretty epistle will no doubt charm you; for I send it to you entire, except the first paragraph which is devoted to a pompous eulogium on the "adorable fair!" Adieu, my over-good-natured brother; and let me again caution you to stand on your guard against me."

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*Varmont to Murville.*

"Paris, November 25.

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"I was not in the smallest degree angry with you, my dear friend:—my only reason for not writing to you was that my time was wholly engrossed by the plagues of business. My younger

sister, whom I had lately settled in the world, has taken into her head to die ; and you know the worthy exit of that Bovile, whose property has been all confiscated. Now, the marriage-portion which I had given him with my sister, is an object worth the trouble of reclaiming : and hence I am eternally surrounded by lawyers and attorneys, who almost distract me. You will say, perhaps, that they must certainly leave me some moments of leisure : — very few, I assure you ; and those few are pretty well employed in the company of a handsome girl who is by no means obdurate. You will therefore excuse me for having, under such circumstances, given love the preference over friendship.

“As to the wench you mention, Laf-

sure you she was as far from my thoughts as if I had never seen her in my whole life. I was, indeed, almost surprised to find that she was still in existence : still greater was my astonishment on learning that she was in any other hands than yours. But Lafleur, with whom I have had some conversation on the subject, has positively assured me . . . . . that he saw her very negligently watched at your country-seat ; and in fact I know the damsel is very alert in decamping.

“ *A-propos !* I had promised you her history : I will now give you a sketch of it. The dear girl had been sold to me here for about half a hundred louis-d'ors, by a sort of a mother, who warranted her untouched. But, in this particular, I was, at the very outset, cheat-



ed in the bargain. Nevertheless, such was my infatuation, that I consented, at her earnest entreaty, to conduct her to Brest, where she said she wished to bid adieu to her brother, who was ready to sail on board the fleet. That pretended brother, however, was a scoundrel gallant of hers : and on the very night of our arrival at Brest, whilst I lay fast asleep, and little dreaming of the trick that was prepared for me, the amiable girl, having first taken the prudent precaution of seizing all my valuables, gently opened the door, and made a precipitate retreat. But my servant, who is awaked by the slightest noise, heard her footsteps on the stair-case, pursued her, and was near overtaking her by the water-side, when, blinded by her fears, she jumped into the sea. By what miraculous interference of provi-

dence she escaped from that situation and came into your possession, heaven only knows. — You may now act as you please, my dear friend: but, for your own sake, I advise you to think no more of her. You will have to encounter abundant plague and vexation in the pursuit of her: but, 'pon honour, she is not worth the trouble.

“ I grant, nevertheless, that, if you do really entertain a friendship for the man who has conceived a fancy to make her his wife, you cannot be too expeditious in taking measures, however violent, to prevent him from concluding a marriage which would disgrace him in the first instance, and would sooner or later prove an inexhaustible source of misery to him.

“Whatever resolution you may adopt on the occasion, the only interest I feel in the business is what proceeds from friendship for you, my dear Murville; and I sincerely hope that you may be able to banish her from your thoughts, as I wish her to forget me. I hope, however, that the foolish blockhead, who, on a former occasion, undertook to warrant me safe with respect to her, and thereby in some measure cheated me of my money, will have reason to repent of the deception. Adieu, Murville! I pity you if you still love her: I pity your friend much more, if he marries her.”

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SUCH, Dorothy, were the mortifying insults I was obliged to endure in pre-

sence of that young man who is almost distracted with love and with fear, and who perhaps finds a difficulty in repelling suspicions the most injurious to the woman he loves. I trembled for his sister when I began the dreadful task of reading the letters. But when I saw the tendency of the detestable falsehoods which the ingenious villany of Varmont had fabricated with a view of ruining me, — when I perceived that his atrocious calumnies would at least furnish a more impenetrable veil to blind the eyes of Madame D'Etiolles — and that, at the expense of these new outrages offered to me, that amiable woman would be rescued from the frightful consequences of a discovery, — I in some degree resumed my courage. I continued to read with a more steady voice : — I read the letters

through : and Bovile, who, in all the anguish of cruel expectation, was at first alarmed for his wife, soon changed the object of his apprehensions, and shuddered for me alone.

I pass over in silence the long commentary to which the insolent remarks of Murville gave rise : but some of the observations which were produced by the calumnies of Varmont, unfortunately deserve to be related.

At that passage of Varmont's letter where he says " you know the worthy exit of that Bovile, whose property has been all confiscated " —

" Unparalleled insolence ! " exclaimed the husband of Madame D'Etioules — " and shall I, after that, any longer

obey the dictates of a mistaken delicacy? — Know then — what I repent of not having told you before — know that this Varmont was the very person who caused me to be thrown into the Bastille. Yes, it was he: every circumstance concurs in proving the fact to demonstration. On my arrival at Paris, I immediately flew to the house of my unworthy brother-in-law, to inquire of himself in person whether it was true that he reclaimed six hundred thousand livres which he had never paid. — The unblushing scoundrel had the effrontery to tell me to my face that I never would have given him a receipt for that sum if he had not paid it to me. — Shocked at such consummate villany, I instantly quitted the house, and went to put up at an hôtel, to which, I make no doubt,



he had me followed by one of his servants. It was then, for the first time, I learned that the report which had encouraged me to undertake the journey, was wholly unfounded. My enemy being still in office, I ought to have instantly quitted the capital : but I wished to write a letter to my wife ; and, besides, I was much fatigued with travelling. I therefore ventured to stop for a few hours. Not a living soul in the whole city, except Varmont, had even the slightest suspicion of my being still in existence, or of my journey to the capital. Nevertheless an information was given against me that very night, as you already know, since the ministerial runners, who were charged with the *lettre-de-cachet* for my arrest, came to seize me in my bed at four o'clock in the morning."

Madame D'Etioules and her brother could scarcely believe it possible that Varmont should be guilty of such black and infamous treachery: but, for my part, Dorothy, the moment I heard the account, which I am convinced is literally true, I plainly recognised the hand of Varmont throughout the whole transaction.

Meanwhile, I resumed the reading of the letters, but soon stopped at a subsequent passage, and, casting a look towards Bovile, "Yes," said I, "'tis true, indeed that I was '*sold by a sort of a mother*;' but it was the most generous of men who bought me. Yet what a base requital he has received from my worthless relatives! Ah! heaven grant, at least, that he may expe-

rience, in a new alliance, that happiness of which every individual of my family seems destined to deprive him !”

The two persons, my dear Dorothy, to whom the real import of my words was unintelligible, could not forbear giving them a very unfavourable interpretation ; for I saw Madame D’Etioles blush, and Monsieur Dolerval sink overwhelmed with consternation.

A few lines further on, Madame D’Etioles in a tremulous tone asked me whether it was true that I had been ‘ *conducted to Brest.*’

“ Alas ! Madam, it is true !” was my answer — an answer which cost her brother several deep sighs.

"Is it true," asked he in his turn, "that you loved some person on board the fleet?"

"Yes, Sir — I — I did love a certain person —"

At this answer, Dorothy, he turned pale — he sat down — and I thought he would have fainted away.

A moment after, Bovile exclaimed with vehemence, "But it is a labyrinth of complicated villany, obscurity, and infamy, in the mazes of which my senses are lost — my reason bewildered."

"Yes!" cried Dolerval, impetuously starting up from his seat — "yes! you have rightly named it a labyrinth

of complicated villany, obscurity, and infamy — a mystery of iniquity — a heap of calumnies, to which, notwithstanding her confessions, I cannot yet prevail on myself to give credit.”

At length I reached the conclusion of the letters. — Madame D’Etioules remained for some time silent: then looking at me with an air which affected me to the very soul, “Well!” said she, “I now expect . . . .”

“Expect, dear Madam!”

“Your name, your secrets, your misfortunes — those misfortunes which are to justify you.”

“In order to justify myself, Madam,

I must facrifice the most deferving of women."

" Juliette ! my dear Juliette ! appearances are ftrongly againft you : — your own confeffion feems to confirm them : — fpeak, nevertheless, and I am ready to believe . . . . "

" And I, Madam, am ready to facrifice myfelf . . . . "

" I beg, Juliette," faid fhe, ftepping back to fome little diftance, " that you will ferioufly reflect on the matter. The confeffion which I folicit you to make, is indifpenfably neceffary."

" You infift on it, Madam ? — Then



I — I request you will allow me three days to consider of it."

"Three days!" exclaimed the youth, who had listened all the while in the most cruel anxiety of expectation.

"Three days!" added Madame D'Etioules.

"Yes, three days; and if I do not, at the expiration of that time, acquaint you with my history, I promise at least that I shall then depart, though with the most heart-felt regret, from this house where my presence is productive of nought but uneasiness and confusion."

"What a severe alternative you pro-

pose, Juliette ! And do you then think that I can consent to it with indifference ? Besides see that young man ! — see . . . . !”

“ Take pity on my sufferings !” interrupted he.

“ Your sufferings,” said I, “ add poignancy to mine : nevertheless I must continue inflexible. But will you, Dolerval, grant me one favour ?”

“ Speak, Juliette ! my very life is at your command.”

“ The more dreadful the contents of those letters, the more necessary it is that they should remain in my posses-

sion. I beg you will allow me to keep and make a proper use of them.

“Alas !” replied he, “what a present ! — You are going, Juliette ? — Cruel woman ! do you wish that such dreadful suspicions . . . . ?”

“I cannot prevent you, Sir, from entertaining them : but a day will yet come, Dolerval, — a day will come, when *calumniated innocence* will only appear more engaging !”

At these words I withdrew. — And now, Dorothy, that I have unbosomed myself to you, let me commit to the flames those abominable letters, those additional proofs of the villany of Varmont. — There ! — and thus perish every trace of his crimes !

"I was surprised to find she was still in existence," says he. — Wretch! I believe you were. You had left no measures untried to guard against such a surprise: and from the concluding words of that letter penned by your murderous hand, I am convinced that your unfortunate accomplice will be severely punished for having been less barbarous, inhuman, and savage, than his employer.

And as to that Murville, whose conduct towards me has already been so culpable, what designs can he still have upon me? What new scheme of oppression has he formed against his slave? — His slave! no! I no longer am, I cannot again be, his slave. Bovile is here! and Dolerval, moreover — I am convinced that Dolerval would never

suffer his brother to insult me. Besides, have I not an infallible resource against every attempt of his? What have I to fear from the most determined persecutor, since I see myself reduced to that extreme of wretchedness which makes me look on death as a blessing?

## EMILY to DOROTHY:

December 11, midnight.

AT length the dreadful measure of my misfortunes is filled. Read, Dorothy, and learn the new series of disastrous events that have just taken place.

It was near six o'clock in the evening, when the growing darkness rendered it difficult to distinguish objects at a small distance: I still kept myself shut up in my apartment, where I at least enjoyed the liberty of sighing without interruption. — Bovile knocked at my door, requested me to open it, and then entreated that I would indulge him with the opportunity of a short conversation. — Alarmed lest he should be seen in



my bed-chamber, and justly apprehensive that such a disagreeable discovery would give additional force to the jealous suspicions entertained by his wife, I represented to him that it would be much more advisable to converse in the garden. He agreed to the proposal; and, on our arrival there, he immediately exclaimed, "Your brother is the most execrable villain upon earth. It was he — I have not a doubt it was he, that set fire to the ship in which you were embarked."

I endeavoured to defend my brother against the charge.

"No ! no !" cried Bovile : "your generosity can no longer blind me : conviction flashes on my mind ; and from every circumstance I am persuaded

ed that you too are convinced. My dear Emily, I much fear that others will soon be equally so. This morning, in the agony of grief by which you were overpowered, you said too much. My wife's thoughts are now busily occupied in pondering, conjecturing, collecting together a crowd of detached circumstances, and comparing with them your irreproachable conduct and your equivocal answers. From your confessions, obscure as they were, she draws inferences which aid her in tracing with cruel certainty those facts that have been so distorted and misrepresented in Varmont's letter. — A few minutes ago, walking about the room, she said to herself — ' Her mother sold her ! — a generous man bought her ! — she was conducted to Brest ! — she was in love with somebody on board the

fleet! — she fell into the sea! — Then suddenly turning to me, my unfortunate wife asked me with vehemence this alarming question — ‘How old was Mademoiselle de Varmont when you married her?’ — Oh, Emily! beautiful and generous Emily, I much fear that the dreadful *denouement* is at hand. Let us, however, redouble our precautions to keep it at a distance.”

“Hush!” said I, interrupting him.

“Why?” said Bovile.

“Look behind you — see that young man — Dolerval — following us — watching us — listening to our discourse.”

“One word more,” added he in a

whisper. "Let us continue our walk a few minutes longer, in order to save appearances. Do you then return to your apartment — lock yourself in — and if Madame D'Etioules knocks at the door, don't open it. At midnight I'll come to you, and take you away — yes, unfortunate Emily, I'll conduct you back to the solitude of the cloister, from which I once rescued you, only to plunge you deeper in misfortune."

"Hush ! hush ! he is quite near us."

"Well, then, let us change the subject of our conversation."

"Yes, let us speak of the alarm given me by Murville : after what has this day happened, I may, without im-

propriety, venture to talk of him in his brother's hearing."

By this time, Dorothy, the young man joined our company, but, according to his usual practice of late, without uttering a single word. He only walked by my side, as on former occasions, and regulated his steps by ours. I, on the other hand, without speaking to him — without even looking at him — continued to converse with Bovile in that easy natural tone which one preserves when not afraid of being overheard by a third person. "I confess," said I, "that I am seriously alarmed when I think of Murville. What wicked scheme can it be that he is plotting against me?"

"Make your mind easy on that

head," replied Bovile: "those puny sparks, who are so formidable in the seduction of female innocence — believe me, it is only against women that they have any courage. It is not against men who have seen service that they dare display their strength and valour. As long as a single drop of blood flows in my veins, you have nothing to fear from your contemptible enemies: a bare look from a man of spirit is sufficient to make them tremble."

As he concluded these words, we had reached the extremity of the harbour, near a private door which opens from the garden towards the suburbs. At the moment when Bovile turned round, intending to go quietly back to the house, the young man, unaccountably urged by a sudden impulse of madness, seized



me in his arms, and hurried me away with the rapidity of the lightning. At the same time, the door opened of itself, and instantly shut behind me. Thus was I, in a moment, separated from my protector ; and whilst Bovile — stupefied, no doubt, by my sudden disappearance — remained confined in the garden, I was thrust into a post-chaise which stood in waiting on the spot ; my ravisher sprang into it after me ; the driver whipped his horses, and I was carried away at full gallop.

I confess that even then I felt a greater degree of surprise than of apprehension. “ Unfortunate Dolerval ! ” said I — “ do you reflect on the step you are taking ? to what an extreme of madness has your passion impelled you ! ’Tis to your dearest friend that you now offer

an insult : 'tis from the house of your beloved Eleonora that you carry off the woman whom your respectful attachment had inspired with sentiments of ..... of esteem ! What ! are you, too, Dolerval, become the oppressor of womankind ?”

To these expostulations I received no other answer than a half-stifled titter.— I now began to be seriously alarmed: I loaded the young man with reproaches, and asked him a thousand questions : but he preserved an obstinate silence.— At length the most frightful suspicions began to darken my mind, and I shrieked with terror. Immediately he stopped my mouth with one hand, while with the other he took insulting liberties. Enraged at his insolence, I exerted both my teeth and my nails in in-

flitting on him several marks of my resentment: but this cruel struggle was interrupted by one still more cruel. We heard the report of a pistol; and the postillion fell to the ground, crying "murder! murder!" At the same instant, a ruffian appeared at the carriage-door, and discharged a second shot. By the flash of his pistol, I could perceive that the assassin was masked, and that the person who a moment before had insulted me, and was now become my protector, was Murville. Murville had thrown himself forward between me and the murderer, and received in his body the shot which was levelled at me. "Whoever you are," cried he, "take my purse and my life! but spare her! respect such beauty!" Meanwhile he searched for his pistols, but could not find them; and whilst a third shot

was fired, which, I suppose, missed him, he sprang from the carriage — seized his enemy by the throat — overpowered him, — brought him to the ground — and, while rolling and struggling with him in the dust, repeatedly cried out “ My pistols ! my pistols ! see if they be not under the cushion.”

In this dreadful emergency, Dorothy, I felt myself animated with preternatural courage. I leapt from the chaise, armed with Murville’s pistols ; and the hand of a woman was perhaps to terminate the life of a murderer. But judge how great my terror, when, at that very moment, and at no great distance from the combatants, I perceived a man who, in an attitude of pain and astonishment, remained a quiet spectator of this dreadful conflict, — but who now

approached me, and earnestly examined my features.

“What ! ’tis you, Madam ! Allow me,” said he, snatching the pistols from my hand, — “allow me, who once saved your life in this very wood, to save you now from the commission of a crime. To me it belongs to take vengeance for those diabolical deeds which he has so often attempted to force me to perpetrate : — to me it belongs to punish him.”

From these words, Dorothy, you will as readily conclude that it was Lafleur who spoke to me, as I discovered him by the sound of his voice : — I need not therefore tell you who was the cruel monster against whom Murville maintained this unequal combat.

Enraged with fury, the servant levelled one of the pistols at his master, but with a feeble, trembling, unsteady hand, when suddenly he staggered, and fell to the ground, writhing in agony. The shot, nevertheless, must have hit his accomplice, who immediately uttered a loud shriek. He was not however disabled by the wound, which seemed, on the contrary, to redouble his strength by redoubling his rage: for, by one mighty effort, he disengaged himself from the grasp of Murville, and ran towards me with a drawn dagger in his hand.

“Advance, cruel wretch!” said I.  
 “I shall not attempt to pick up the remaining pistol, which your accomplice was unable to make use of, in order to defend myself. I had rather a thousand



times receive death at your hand, than take away your life."

But it seems my hour was not yet come. — Murville, animated by the sight of my critical situation, collected all his strength, sprang up, and rushed in between us, exclaiming, " Poor girl ! what have I brought you to ? 'tis *your* blood that he thirsts for !" Thus the unfortunate man, who was by this time sufficiently punished, lamented and protected me at the same moment. With his unarmed hand he several times warded off the dagger which was aimed at my breast : but there was little probability that he could have long resisted ; and his murderer must have soon found himself at liberty to shed his sister's blood, unmolested. The kindness of heaven, however, did not

suffer the devoted victim to feel the concluding horrors of the dreadful sacrifice :—my knees tottered — my eyes grew dim — and I fell senseless under the wheels of the carriage.

On recovering my senses, I discovered a scene — such a scene as I shall never forget ! Alas ! why was I recalled to life ? — But, excuse me, Dorothy — I must for a moment quit you, and repair to the bed-side of the dying man.

## BOVILE to DOROTHY.

Tours, 12th December, six in the afternoon.

**WORTHY** sister of a woman whose matchless beauty is still inferior to her angelic goodness, — unfortunate sister of the most execrable villain who has ever trod the earth, — 'tis that Emily, for whom you entertain the most tender affection, and in whose defence I shall be ever ready to risk the last drop of my blood — 'tis Emily, who, overwhelmed by the weight of her distresses, but still anxious to remove your uneasiness, has charged me to acquaint you with the particulars of her fate.

Be not alarmed, Madam : your sister is now safe from all further danger ;

she escaped without a wound: and would to heaven that we could as successfully shield her heart from the shafts of sorrow and affliction, as we rescued her from the dagger of an assassin!

Dolerval had snatched away Emily from my side — so, at least, I imagined. I ran into the house, and there found him in company with his sister. “Astomishing!” cried I — “you have but this moment carried off Juliette in the garden — and I now find you here!”

“Heavens!” exclaimed Dolerval — “it must be my brother! — quick! quick! let us pursue!”

We hastily saddled our horses, and, at all events, I thought it well to take

my cutlafs with me. Our fervants were ordered to follow us with all poffible fpeed, while Dolerval and I, with the rapidity of lightning, gallopped off in purfuit of the ravifher.

At about half a league from Tours, we came up with a carriage ftanding in the highway, in the middle of a wood. At a fmall diftance from it, were two men fighting near a woman who lay motionlefs on the ground. One of them brandifhed a dagger: the other was unarmed. "Help! help!" cried the courageous youth, who firmly maintained his ground, though repeatedly wounded by his enemy.

"'Tis Murville that he is murdering!" exclaimed Dolerval—and I immediately rufhed on the other, whom

we took for a robber, and with repeated strokes brought him to the ground.

When the danger was over, Murville, who had by this time suffered a considerable loss of blood, fainted away. We bound up his wounds as well as the darkness of the night would allow us; and lifting up Emily, who was still in a state of insensibility, we placed her in the chaise. At this moment we heard hollow groans at a small distance from us; and soon after a voice struck our ears — “Oh, my bowels! my bowels! I burn! I’m undone! — help! help! and I’ll discover the whole.”

We turned towards the sound; and searching for the person from whom it proceeded, I stumbled over the body



of a man who lay writhing on the ground in the most excruciating convulsions. He attempted to speak ; but, seized with a more violent paroxysm of pain, was unable to utter any thing but shrieks and groans. A few steps farther, Dolerval found a man in the agonies of death : — 'twas Murville's postillion. On the other side I heard mingled groans, imprecations, and blasphemies, which sufficiently proved to me that the villain whom I had levelled in the dust, was yet far from his last moments.

Surrounded by so many persons in danger, our situation became embarrassing, when fortunately I descried at a distance the gleam of flambeaux, which I immediately concluded our servants were bringing to us. Nor was

I mistaken: it was our people who were coming: but they came not unaccompanied. They escorted a carriage, in which was..... alas! my wife herself in person. — Eleonora, apprehensive, that, after having overtaken the ravisher, we might perhaps be unable to prevail on him to resign his prey — and that a fatal affray might ensue between her brother and her husband — Eleonora had hastened after us, with a view to try what effect she could produce on her brother's mind by her solicitations, which might probably have greater influence than our remonstrances. — Unfortunate woman! what a dreadful scene was she doomed to witness! — what a distressing part was she doomed to act in it! but how much more cruel, how much more distress-

ing, the *éclaircissement* which was to ensue!

Murville was the first who recovered his senses, and "first of all," said he in a feeble tone, "relieve me from my doubts, by tearing the mask from that villain's face."

We immediately obeyed him — and he at once recognised the wretch. I too recognised him, and shuddered at the discovery. "Inhuman Varfont!" said he — "it is then true that you wished to murder me for the sake of a woman! — to murder *me*? nay you wished to murder your mistress herself!"

"His mistress?" interrupted the man

who had already spoken to me—"No! she is his sister!"

"His sister!" repeatedly exclaimed Murville in affright—"his sister!—ah! villain! the dark mystery is now brought to light:—this is not the first time you have attempted to take away her life. And I was a friend to this monster! Gracious heaven! you have not yet sufficiently punished me!"

"His sister!" exclaimed Eleonora, bursting into tears.—"Ah! if he is Juliette's brother, whose wife, then, am I?"

"His sister!" re-echoed Dolerval in piteous tone. "Then she is forever snatched from my hopes! she is not at

liberty ! His sister ! — Bovile ! luckless Bovile ! you have ruined Eleonora !”

“ You are then Bovile ?” said the elder brother of Madame D’Etioles : —  
“ and this generous, this beauteous, this respectable woman, whom I have so grossly offended, — whose misfortunes I have so cruelly aggravated, — whose virtues I so blindly overlooked, — she is yours ? she is your wife ?”

“ No !” answered Emily, who at that moment recovered her senses : — “ no !” said she, pointing to Madame D’Etioles — “ there is his wife.”

“ How !” replied Murville ; then after a short pause, — “ oh ! yes ! my sister . . . . once more at liberty ! Bo-

vile . . . . . still in existence! . . . . . lost his former wife! . . . . . Yes, I now recollect what Dolerval . . . . . I comprehend the whole mystery:—this gentleman proves to be the husband of two wives.”—At these words he presented his hand to Madame D’Etioles with a look of tender sympathy, and mingled his tears with hers.

Meanwhile every motive urged us to retire as speedily as possible from this scene of horror.—Murville proposed that he should be conveyed in the post-chaise,—that Lafleur should be placed by his side,—and that one of the servants should keep guard over Varmont, until some of the party could return to take him away. But the tender and generous Emily would not suffer her detestable brother to remain in



that abandoned state. She requested, or rather commanded,—for, at that moment especially, her every word had the influence of a command,—that Murville and Lafleur should be placed in the front seat of the coach, while she and Madame D'Etioles took possession of the back seat. Thus her two persecutors were indebted to her for the sad pleasure and consolation of being able to renew to her their assurances of sincere repentance. Thus my two unfortunate wives, seated side by side, had an opportunity of embracing each other, and perhaps alleviating their misfortunes by mingling their sorrows. Thus the execrable wretch who had attempted the life of her who is so dear to us all, was placed alone in the post-chaise which his murderous hands had stained with blood, and where his

now impotent rage vented itself in the most dreadful imprecations.

As to Murville's unfortunate postilion, I had his lifeless body placed on one of the horses. — Dolerval and I, oppressed with unutterable grief, took our station on each side of the coach, which echoed with the sighs of those who were the dearest objects of our affection. In this order we set out ; and the sad cavalcade slowly proceeded to the city.

We had dispatched a servant before us to summon the assistance of the faculty ; and on our arrival at the house, we found the surgeons in waiting. They first examined Murville's wounds ; and I have the satisfaction of announcing to you that that courageous youth,

so generous and noble even in the midst of his misconduct, — that youth, now reformed by the dreadful lesson he has received, is not in danger. His life will be preserved, to furnish the young men of the age with the glorious example of a reformation which I believe to be complete and sincere. The ball having only glanced on his breast, left but a slight contusion : and, in the unequal struggle with Varfont, he displayed so much dexterity in parrying the dagger repeatedly aimed at his breast, that his right arm only was hurt : and it fortunately happens, that, of two wounds he received in it, neither is deep or dangerous.

But how unjust the decision of fate in ordaining that the villain Varfont should be equally fortunate !—The shot

which was fired at him by his own servant, did little more than graze his shoulder; and, of the three wounds with which I brought him to the ground, not one is mortal. The pain which Murville begins to feel, prevents him from closing his eyes during the whole night; and Varmont can already enjoy a sound sleep! I fear, that, for the misfortune and the disgrace of mankind, we shall restore that monster to the society of men. In that case I should have much reason to regret that I did not redouble my blows.

On the other hand, the unfortunate Lafleur, whose eyes were now opened by the questions we had been obliged to put to him, and by the increasing pains which racked his whole frame, soon conjectured what the physician

had already whispered to us. — “I am certainly poisoned!” was his constant exclamation. — At length, as the medicines which were administered afforded him no relief, and the convulsive fits seized him with greater frequency and violence, he begged that Emily, Dolerval, and I, should attend at his bed-side, to receive his dying confession. The following are nearly the whole of the particulars of which you are yet ignorant: but I do not pretend to repeat them in the original coarseness of expression in which he delivered them.

“When I took the boat to my master  
 “at Brest, I knew nothing of what he  
 “had been doing on board the Cen-  
 “taur. When once the crime was  
 “committed, Varmont declared to me,

“ that, if I betrayed him, he would  
“ confess the whole, but would accuse  
“ me of being his accomplice, and  
“ would maintain that assertion to his  
“ last moment. — Soon after, learning  
“ that his victim was still in existence,  
“ he charged me to go and complete  
“ ‘ *our operation,*’ as he called it. My  
“ only inducement to undertake the  
“ commission was my fear lest the for-  
“ mer crime should be discovered, and  
“ Varmont should bring me to the scaf-  
“ fold along with himself. But I had  
“ not sufficient courage for such a deed:  
“ nevertheless I persuaded my master  
“ that I had punctually obeyed his or-  
“ ders. — Varmont, who no doubt al-  
“ ready meditated my destruction, re-  
“ tained me in his service: and I —  
“ wretched man that I was! — I re-  
“ mained with him, — partly terrified



“ by his threats of vengeance in case  
“ I should quit him, and more espec-  
“ ally, I own it, in hopes of at length  
“ obtaining the sum of money he had  
“ promised as my reward. — He conti-  
“ nued to amuse me with fair pro-  
“ mises, until he should find an oppor-  
“ tunity of securing me beyond the  
“ reach of danger, as he expressed him-  
“ self. At length, about the beginning  
“ of this month he told me that Mon-  
“ sieur Murville having insulted him,  
“ and refused to give him any satisfac-  
“ tion, he was determined to force him  
“ into a duel. ‘ I cannot,’ added he,  
“ ‘ compel him to it at Brest, where he  
“ has a number of friends, and where  
“ I must be cautious of making my ap-  
“ pearance : but do you, my dear La-  
“ fleur, haste thither — watch his mo-  
“ tions — and the moment he has the

“ misfortune to quit the town, follow  
 “ him wherever he goes — and write  
 “ me word where I can meet him !” —  
 “ Unfortunate wretch that I was ! I  
 “ gave into the snare. On the receipt  
 “ of my first letter, my master came  
 “ with all haste to the vicinity of Tours,  
 “ where Monsieur Murville had been  
 “ four days in concealment. I could  
 “ not tell why it was — but yesterday  
 “ my mind foreboded some evil that  
 “ awaited me. In the morning I gave  
 “ Varmont an account of a conversa-  
 “ tion I had just had with Monsieur  
 “ Murville’s postillion, with whom I  
 “ had taken a glass, and who informed  
 “ me that his master intended to return  
 “ in the evening to his country-seat,  
 “ accompanied by a young fellow-tra-  
 “ veller. — ‘ We must lie in wait for  
 “ him on his passage,’ replied he with

“ a look of the greatest satisfaction. —  
“ Accordingly we took our station a-  
“ bout noon in the spot where you met  
“ us. There we remained on the watch  
“ the whole day ; and when it was now  
“ dark night, I heard the rattle of a post-  
“ chaise, and could distinguish James’s  
“ voice encouraging his horses. — ‘ Ha!’  
“ exclaimed my scoundrel master, ‘ ’tis  
“ well ! but do you, my dear Lafleur,’  
“ added he, taking from his pocket a  
“ bottle of brandy, of which he knows  
“ I am passionately fond, — ‘ do you  
“ begin by taking a dram : — it will  
“ give you strength and courage ; and  
“ perhaps I may stand in need of  
“ your assistance.’ — I hastily emptied  
“ the bottle, and then for the first time  
“ recollecting myself, ‘ But, Sir,’ said  
“ I, ‘ I have no arms.’ — ‘ Poltroon !’  
“ replied he in a brutal manner, ‘ ’tis

“just as it should be. Rascal! you  
“have once deceived me. Well! look  
“on at present, and leave me to act:  
“but do not flinch; or, by heaven, I  
“instantly blow your brains out!” —  
“At these words he sprang out into the  
“road; and as soon as he could distin-  
“guish Monsieur Murville’s livery, he  
“levelled his pistol at poor James, and,  
“with the muzzle almost touching his  
“ear, discharged his shot, and killed  
“him. — What happened afterwards,  
“you already know.”

It was near an hour, Dorothy, before we could collect this dreadful confession, which was every moment interrupted by the excruciating agonies of the unfortunate wretch who was making it. He concluded by begging a thousand pardons of Emily, whose

whole frame was agitated by the mingled emotions of terror and pity, during the shocking recital.—He then requested her blessing; and soon after, happy to see his sufferings at an end, he breathed his last.

I cannot find words to describe to you the admirable conduct of your sister during the whole course of that fatal night. Figure to yourself our dear Emily alarmed at the long-continued swoon of her murderer—refusing to quit us, except for one short moment to acquaint you with a part of her new misfortunes—hastening back to the bed where lay Varmont, on whom she still bestowed the tender appellation of brother, but who was incapable of hearing her voice—next running to visit Murville, whom her tender attention

astonished and consoled at the same time — endeavouring to revive the drooping spirits of Dolerval who was sunk in the deepest despair — inspiring even me with courage and resolution to bear up against this cruel reverse of fortune — mingling her tears with those of Madame D'Etioules — and sighing over the death-bed of the unfortunate accomplice of Varmont.

But, on the other hand, conceive, even in the midst of her misfortunes, the triumph that attends her virtues so long persecuted, and her innocence so late discovered. Represent to yourself my dear Eleonora less afflicted perhaps by her own griefs than by those of her friend, — Dolerval bitterly reproaching himself for the unjust jealousy he had entertained, and the in-



jealous suspicions he had been tempted to harbour, — and Murville now more fully convinced of the wrongs he had done to her, — more deeply repentant of his past conduct, — more severely mortified that he had not laboured to merit the esteem of that adorable woman — “ Yes ! Dolerval ! ” cries he, “ truly adorable, as you justly represented her ! ”

But, above all the rest, conceive, if possible, how much I am at once both enchanted and distracted by the sight of those two women, who, if not equally adored, have at least equal claims to my adoration. Figure to yourself, if you can, what horrors, what charms, I find in the diversified scene which this eventful crisis has presented to my view.

## BOVILE to DOROTHY.

12th December, 5 in the afternoon.

WEEP, Dorothy!—you have no longer a brother.—Rejoice!—the earth is rid of a monster!

The clock had announced the hour of noon—Emily still sat immovable by his bed-side, and impatiently waited the termination of a restless unrefreshing sleep which seemed to have oppressed him;—when, suddenly awaking, he darted a savage look at his sister—recognised her—and furiously sprang from the bed towards her. She screamed with terror, and betook herself to flight. I instantly flew to her assistance, and stopped the ruffian.

Lucky it was that I did so!—one moment later, and he would have seized Emily—he would have sacrificed her. Meanwhile the returning paroxysm of his fever gave him prodigious strength, and I must unavoidably have been overpowered, if my friends had not all together run to my assistance. When I was disengaged from his grasp, the blood-thirsty tiger, thus disappointed of his prey, turned all his rage against himself. He furiously rolled on the floor—mangling his own flesh, and tearing away the dressings of his wounds. An attempt was made to prevent him: but I cried out, “No! let his destiny take its course! Is it not better that he should die here than on a public scaffold? Have not his crimes already brought sufficient affliction on his family? do you wish, that, by an effect of the

cruel prejudices of the age \*, he should moreover entail infamy and disgrace upon his relatives by suffering an ignominious death from the hand of the executioner? Besides, what executioner can be found, whose hand is sufficiently base and detestable for such a wretch? — Let the infamous villain himself execute the decrees of avenging fate. Varmont alone is worthy to inflict due punishment on Varmont."

I have, Dorothy, too great a respect for your feelings, to repeat to you all the horrible expressions which his impure lips uttered during his last moments. I will not distress you by describing the

\* Guilt, not the gallows, constitutes the shame.

This beautiful maxim is henceforward consecrated by a wise decree of the Convention, and by a great example.

incessant ravings of his distracted mind, haunted by the most frightful spectres. I will not tell you in what shocking delirium he past the last five hours of his dreadful agony. But you may rely on it, that hell itself has not torments equal to those he suffered.

At length he has breathed his last — he has just expired, renouncing his family, his country, and his God.

Happily his sister was not present, to hear his expiring groan. She — affectionate and credulous woman — still relied on the mercy of heaven, — as if heaven could have any mercy in store for such a detestable villain — or a death-bed repentance, extorted only by the goading apprehensions of almighty justice, could have any merit in the all-

seeing eye of the undeceivable searcher of hearts! — She earnestly entreated us to procure a priest to hear Varmont's confession, and give him absolution before he died: and as none of us seemed to her to make sufficient haste, she herself, in that moment of confusion, ran forth in quest of a clergyman to administer spiritual consolation to her agonising brother. — Unfortunate woman! she quitted the affecting scene within doors, only to encounter a new subject of affliction abroad!



## EMILY to DOROTHY.

Tours, December 16.

AFTER such a fatal *éclaircissement*, after so dreadful an explosion, it would have been utterly improper that Dolerval and Bovile should remain above four and twenty hours longer in the place which resounded with the sighs of the ill-fated Eleonora and the afflicted Emily. Accordingly they set out three days ago, and have together entered on ship-board, there silently to indulge their sorrows and their hopes—yes! Dorothy! their hopes!—the manner in which Bovile bade me adieu, has inspired my desponding heart with fresh courage.

“That government,” said he, “whose galling yoke weighs so heavy on the neck of every Frenchman, cannot much longer support itself. The iron rod of tyranny, smeared with the filth of corruption, disgraces the nation on whom it is inflicted, and begins to wear out her astonishing patience. Nevertheless, her enemies, blindly actuated by an inconceivable infatuation, instead of alleviating the weight of her chains, are daily employed in labouring to render them still more heavy and oppressive. The measure will soon be filled—the hour now rapidly approaches, when my country will have no other alternative than ruin or regeneration. Ah! I am willing to cherish the fond hope that the guardian genius of France, ever watchful for her safety, will support her during the convulsions at-

tendant on that crisis — a tremendous crisis, no doubt, but which alone, after some moments of anguish, can restore her to her former youth and beauty, endue her with undecaying vigour, and replace her in the foremost rank among nations. When that happy day shines forth, its beams shall instantly dispel a dark host of prejudices, ancient and contemptible as the ignorance and superstition which gave them birth. Then," added he, squeezing my hand, " your dear Dorothy shall no longer sigh in vain: for the cloisters shall be forced to open their gates, and suffer their victims to recover their liberty: — then, poor Father Sévin, now so wretched, will be able to find some consolation upon earth: for celibacy, hunted and pursued to the very altar, shall no longer be permitted to devour

whole generations of the human species:—then, especially,” continued he, falling on his knees before Madame D’Etiolles, “our tribunals shall no longer resound with those suits for divorces, prosecuted with so much scandal, obtained at the expense of so much shame, and productive of no other consequence than that of condemning young people, who are thus separated but not dis-united, to drag on the remainder of their lives between the evils of celibacy on the one hand, and the crime of adultery on the other. Then will a total stop be put to those prudential marriages, as they are falsely denominated, — those marriages hastily contracted by mistaken young people, who, without making any further inquiry than as to the amount of property on each side, think they know each other

sufficiently, — but often conceive mutual hatred and detestation as soon as they become better acquainted with each other's disposition. Then, too, shall we see crowding to the altars, eager to become husbands and fathers of families; another set of men, not less unfortunate than the preceding — those who, terrified by the example of the present marriages, and afraid to hazard a union with a woman to whom they must be tied for life, make it their business, sooner or later, to seduce the wives of their neighbours. And now, how many laws, think you, are requisite to operate an immediate regeneration of manners throughout this vast empire, — to ensure to millions of individuals the termination of their misery, or the commencement of their happiness? — A single one! a law to

authorise divorces! The certain consequence of such a regulation would be to prevent the necessity of divorces; as it would prove a salutary check on both husbands and wives, and lay them under a strict obligation to preserve, in the marriage state, that mutual respect, that delicate regard, those tender cares, those flattering attentions, which first gave birth to their love for each other, and by which it may be every day increased. As soon as that beneficent law is proclaimed, thousands of unfortunate individuals will break the marriage chain, which is daily bathed with their tears—that chain which is now forged with the adamant links of indissolubility:—thousands of lovers will, under happier auspices, form the wished-for union;—Dolerval will obtain the woman he loves;—and Bovile



— the happy Bovile — will recover his Eleonora.”

Such were his parting words, which our fond credulity easily collected, and takes a pleasure in recalling to memory.

Meantime, however, that distant hope does not sufficiently support Madame D’Etiolles under the pressure of her grief, and of . . . . (I would not venture to use the expression, if the unfortunate woman herself had it not constantly in her mouth) . . . . of her remorse. Notwithstanding all my efforts to console her, I see her hourly sinking into a more and more profound melancholy, of which I dread the consequences as well to herself as to the innocent creature whom she bears in her womb —

a circumstance which is, to her, a source of the most poignant anguish.

At least it would be some alleviation of my distress, if I were only condemned to witness *her* affliction. But there is another scene, not less afflictive, which, though it was but once presented to my view, is ever present to my mind, and harrows up my soul with the painful recollection. Oh! pity me, Dorothy! pity me!

## EMILY TO DOROTHY.

Tours, January 4, 1783.

IT is now, my dear Dorothy, six days since I received your letter; and the grief that it caused me was the only circumstance which has hitherto deprived me of the consolation of writing to you in return.—Notwithstanding the wrongs we have both suffered from Madame de Varmont, I could not refrain from bewailing her untimely death—I could not refuse the tribute of my tears to the memory of one who, with all her faults, was still my mother.

I am entirely of your opinion, and entertain not the smallest doubt that it was the news of her son's crimes, too

soon wafted to her ear by the voice of public report, that prematurely hurried her to the grave. What anguish she must have suffered in her last moments ! Oh ! God ! thou God of justice and of mercy ! her sorrow has surely atoned for her faults ; and let her obtain thy forgiveness, as she has mine !

You tell me, Dorothy, that there now exists no obstacle, to prevent my repairing to your solitude, and there giving and receiving those mutual consolations of which we both stand so much in need. Allow me, however, to entertain a different opinion. My company becomes henceforth indispensably necessary to Madame D'Etiolles. I am to attend her to a distant and obscure village where she intends to conceal herself during the last months of

her pregnancy, and her lying-in. After that, we will both — for she has authorised me to make the promise — we will both take refuge in your convent. — Monsieur Murville, already recovered of his wounds, is now at Brest ; but he has given his sister room to hope that he will accompany her to Paris, when she and I go to take up our abode in the same house with my dear sister. Pursuant to this plan, I have already made all my arrangements. I know your disposition, Dorothy — I know you will not require that I should abandon my friend in the hour of her greatest distress.

As to that subject of affliction which you accuse me of a wish to conceal from you, Dorothy, I shall acquaint you with the whole — I

shall give you a long detail of particulars, which, in the first moments of my cruel agitation, I had fortunately almost all forgotten: but they have since been too distinctly brought back to my recollection by the efforts of busy memory, which, by a certain involuntary impulse, incessantly reverts to them.

In the paroxysms of his raging fever, my dear Dorothy, Varmont had attempted to sacrifice his sister. — Disappointed in his attempt, he vainly struggled under all the agonies of a dreadful delirium; and my only hopes for him rested on the boundless mercies of the Almighty. I fondly hoped that the all-powerful consolations of religion would restore his reason, and recall



him to a due sense of his situation. I repeatedly called for a priest — but I saw no priest arrive. At length, in one of those terrible moments when the frantic rage of my unfortunate brother engaged the attention of every one present, I ran out of the house. It was not in the city, where I am wholly unacquainted, that I went to inquire for a priest: — no — I flew to the neighbouring village, fully persuaded that the rector of St. Cyr would not refuse me his assistance.

With the rapidity of lightning I reached the presbytery. The door was opened to me by Madame D'Eti-oles' old servant, Roussel, who with an air of astonishment asked what was my business.

"I wish to speak to Father Sévin," was my answer.

"To Father Sévin, Madam!"

"Yes, certainly."

"To Father Sévin!" exclaimed he again — "Are you serious, Madam?"

"A pretty question, truly!" replied I, — and at the same time gently pushing the servant aside, I entered the house.

"Well, Madam," said he, "it does not become me to use violence against you: but — look in the garden yonder."

I flew to the garden, and "Quick!

quick ! Father Sévin," said J,—“ make haste !”

“ Pooh !” replied he—“ is she there ?”

“ Of whom are you speaking ?”

“ Why, of her, to be sure ! — Of whom else should I speak ?”

“ We do not seem to understand each other. — 'Tis to a dying man I request you to come, to perform the last duties for him.”

“ Hah ! is that all ?” cried he, turning from me.

“ But 'tis one of my relatives who is dying.”

"Well! there is no hurry. — And, besides, why do you come to tell me of death? Let us only talk of marriage."

"But, Sir . . . ."

"I will not go, fair lady! — She may come while I'm abroad! — Think, indeed! . . . !"

"Uncle!"

At this expression, he turned round, and gazed on me — but with a look that impressed me at once with a full conviction of his melancholy state, which, in my extreme agitation, I had not before perceived.

"Yes!" said he in a gentle tone —

" 'twas so she used to call me! — Then you are acquainted with her?"

" My dear uncle!" I exclaimed — and in the first emotions of my surprise and compassion, I stretched out my hand to take hold of his.

" Touch it not!" cried he, drawing back his hand — " touch it not! — she has kissed that hand! Look! see! there is the spot where she kissed it! — Oh! charming woman! oh! dearly-beloved! here she dropped a tear — I dried it up with my lips — and I felt it on my heart. — Take care! you'll trample on that woodbine! I'd rather you should trample on my body. 'Twas she that trained it up — and I take great care of it. The others stand the winter well enough: but this must be

uncommonly tender; and, for greater safety, I protect it with straw. — Come this way! See those flowers! I have placed them under the glass-case, because I am determined to preserve them as long as I live. Let me tell you — she has a hundred times watered them with her own hands! Don't you think, that, when she comes back, she'll be delighted to find them all in the most thriving condition?"

Whilst he thus spoke to me, Dorothy, I felt considerable uneasiness, and was gradually moving back towards the house.

"You avoid that bower," said he — "and you do well! — In that spot, the god of love acts the tyrant! 'Twas there my bosom was rent by cruel and



causeless jealousy — 'twas there my complaint began — Good God! what a dreadful complaint! — it nearly caused my death — I should have died, but for Dolerval. — I had taken it into my head that she preferred him to me! I was not aware that she could not give me any proofs of her affection, until priests were allowed to marry. — 'Twas me she loved, and not Dolerval! He told me so himself — the dear friend! — he did more than that! One day — on that day I was ready to sink into the other world — I could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep — I was ill-humoured — peevish — incessantly scolding — striking every one that came in my way! — Well! Madam, on that day my dear friend arrived, and brought with him a fine gentleman from Paris — a well-looking, good-humoured man — a man

of spirit too, for he was not afraid of me; — and such a scholar! — he spoke Latin as fluently as I could. — That gentleman, Madam, was the father of the woman I love. — ‘Do not fret,’ said he; ‘she loves you: she will come back to-morrow: — to-morrow the priests will be married.’”

At this time, Dorothy, I was in the court-yard, and was hastening towards the outer gate: — “Stay a moment,” said he — “step into the house.” — I did not choose to comply, and was still retiring, when he caught hold of my arm. Immediately Rouffel, in a whisper, advised me to make no resistance, assuring me that he would not do me the smallest injury. I therefore yielded to his entreaties, and followed him to the parlour, where we were

scarcely entered when a whole flock of birds came fluttering about us, several of them chirping "Juliette, Juliette:" one of the number in particular very distinctly pronounced, "She'll come to-morrow."

"Yes!" exclaimed my unfortunate uncle, leaping with joy — "yes! for to-morrow the priests will be married. I expected her indeed to-day," continued he, pointing to the table which was laid for dinner: "but I was mistaken: — to-morrow is the day — 'tis to-morrow that the priests will be married. — But, in the mean time, come and hear her!"

At these words he conducted me into the adjoining apartment — sat down near the piano — took up his bass —

flourished a prelude — and would persuade me that a woman was singing, and that he accompanied her. After a while, his instrument fell from his trembling grasp — and he remained for some minutes motionless, and in the attitude of a person listening with the most profound attention. At length he dropped on his knees, exclaiming “ charming fair ! dearly-beloved ! enchanting woman ! my soul ! my life ! come ! haste ! come to-morrow ! to-morrow the priests will be married ! ”

Such, Dorothy, was his extravagant behaviour, which I could not witness, without shedding a flood of tears, and somewhat indiscreetly exclaiming — “ Poor Father Sévin ! ”

“ You need not pity me,” replied

he: — “ I am the happiest of men. I have heard her singing in this manner the whole day long ! the whole night, she will be present to my eyes ! But ’tis to-morrow I shall really see her — to-morrow she is to come — for to-morrow the priests are to be married. — Go, now — go : — it would be too long for you to wait : — it will be at least two hours before she sings again — otherwise, you know, she would ruin her breast — and if she was to die — if Juliette was to die — the world, the whole universe, of which she is the charm and delight, would be immediately annihilated ! ”

At length we had reached the door, and I was truly impatient to escape from this scene, at once so painful and so affecting.

"Ah! since you are acquainted with her," said he, "endeavour to see her this evening. Speak to her of the man who adores her: — be sure you tell her that I have carefully preserved every endearing token that can recall the pleasing remembrance of her — that I burn for her — that I expect her with all the impatience of the most ardent lover! — Ah! may she come, the charming woman! — may she come to-morrow! — 'tis to-morrow that the priests are to be married!"

Oh Dorothy! my dear Dorothy! what a deplorable specimen of human reason! Alas! such are the consequences of my imprudent conduct! Thoughtless woman! to seek in this spot an asylum from the passions! — Wherever I have made my appearance, I have in-



introduced disorder and confusion! In  
 whatever direction I turn my eyes, I see  
 nought but misfortune and distress! —  
 misfortune and distress which alone  
 have caused! — Poor Father Sévin! —  
 And that young man! is he less to be  
 pitied? does he less ardently adore me?  
 — are we not equally separated? — can  
 I ever be his? — Tell me, Dorothy, is  
 Dolerval less an object of pity? — Yes,  
 certainly less — for he is better. — Hea-  
 vens! what was I going to write? —  
 what thoughts crowd on my mind! —  
 Almost under the eyes of a husband! and  
 with a mother's grave yet fresh before  
 my sight! — Ah! wretched Emily! —  
 Alas! such are the consequences  
 of my independent conduct! I ought  
 to look in this place  
 — I have made my appearance, I have

DOROTHY TO EMILY.

Paris, January 9, 1783.

YES, my dear and generous Emily, come at length to console your sister:— come! — but first save your friend.

Tell her before-hand — tell that engaging woman, that she shall see, by the manner in which I receive her, whether or not I am worthy to boast of being sister to Emily.

Meantime, however, behold a new cause to call forth your tears — your bitterest tears. Read this letter, written in Madame de Varmont's own hand, and not found till after the opening of her will. You will shudder at the per-

usal: but you will see at least, that our mother — though criminal in the very act which terminated her existence — was perhaps still entitled to the consolation of having her daughters by her side to receive her dying breath and to close her eyes.

Adieu, my dear Emily! excuse the shortness of this letter, in consideration of the grief excited in my bosom by that which I inclose to you. Adieu!

MADAME DE VARMONT to  
her DAUGHTERS.

Paris, December 23, 1782.

GRACIOUS heaven! in what a dark  
abyss my soul is lost! how dreadful, how  
alarming, the sudden gleam of light  
that darts across the tremendous gloom! —  
Before my eyes, stands in mourning  
garb, and heaving bitter sighs, that  
daughter whom I buried alive; — and,  
not far from her, a monster to whom I  
have given birth — my son — a son  
worthy of his mother! ... shedding the  
blood of his younger sister! — My eyes  
have beheld — but too late — and are  
now about to close in eternal darkness.

You, nevertheless, whom I have se-

cruelly sacrificed — you, my daughters, who must hitherto have entertained no other sentiments towards me than those of detestation, — learn at length that I am perhaps entitled to your pity.

I, too, have been sacrificed by the cruelty of my parents! — and perhaps more inhumanly sacrificed at the altar of Hymen, than you, Dorothy, at that of religion. A passion, strong in its very birth, had already taken possession of my heart, when they introduced to me that Monsieur Varmont. Ah! of what consequence, to a young girl like me, were his talents, his services, the honourable wounds he had received in fighting his country's battles, or the victories he had obtained? Youth and beauty were the objects of my desire: — he possessed neither — whereas both

were united in the man on whom I had previously bestowed my heart. My parents should have approved and confirmed my choice : but, notwithstanding my earnest remonstrances, they refused to comply with my wishes. They tore me from the object of my warmest affections, and consigned me, like a slave, to the arms of this stranger. But how great was my shock, how alarming my terror, when once I was fully apprised of the extent of those duties to which they had subjected me — when I reflected that the bonds with which they had fettered me were indissoluble — and saw myself condemned, without resource, without respite, to drag the burthen of my detested chains through the whole course of my life!

Despair took possession of my soul —



of a soul equally impetuous in its hatred as in its love. Attend, my daughters — blush at my shame — shudder at the excess of misery which extorts from me such a confession — Our sex — groaning under oppression in every country, in every age — have but one mode of avenging their wrongs — but it is an expeditious, an easy, a sure mode. To that I had immediate recourse. Let your astonishment therefore cease, my poor Emily! — you and your assassin are not children of the same father. Madame de Varmont alone claimed a share in him — he was the offspring neither of Hymen nor even of love — but the premeditated fruit of adultery, and ..... my hand trembles while I write it ..... even of prostitution.

Nor was this all. — I had not committed such acts with the intention of concealing them from him to whom I expected they would give the greatest uneasiness : — on the contrary, I hoped to derive an advantage from them — I hoped that the bond by which I was tied to him would immediately be dissolved in consequence. But in this expectation I was miserably disappointed. The only effect that the discovery had on my stoical husband, was to render him jealous and tyrannical. Nay, that pretended hero was mean enough to torment with his odious love a wife who coolly triumphed in her infidelity, and who seemed to take a pride in her own shame. In spite of my tears and opposition, he twice rendered me a mother. — Ah ! my daughters ! pardon me ! I held you

both in detestation — because you both were his undoubted offspring.

Meantime I reserved my whole affection for my son — a fatal affection to him! I early instilled into his bosom, and carefully fostered during his advancing years, a hatred for his sisters. I represented the children of his supposed father as the unwelcome co-heirs of an ample fortune — as intruders who would one day deprive him of the chief part of that immense property which was a poor compensation for the torments I endured on his account. Savage youth! how fully he profited by my criminal instructions! how worthily he has repaid my unnatural lessons!

Well! although his crimes, whose atrocity has no doubt been extenuated

by the officious tenderness of those who have reported them to my ear — although his crimes have curdled my blood with horror, his cruel spirit has taken possession of me: — his soul, insensible to the cries of blood, has taken up its abode in my bosom. The barbarian, even after death, still urges me to unnatural deeds. His furious spirit goads me on: and 'tis by another crime that his mother is to follow him to the grave into which his own crimes have prematurely plunged him!

Adieu, my daughters! — your father's pistols lie before me on the table: — I have loaded them without shuddering — without shuddering, I will use them. — I do not intend, by relying for my destruction on the painful effects of a tardy poison, to expose myself to be

tortured by the cruel assistance of physicians, and — feeble victim! — to struggle with death for some hours. No! let a sudden, a single, an irremediable stroke terminate my existence! and let those warriors who so proudly plume themselves on their courage — let them learn from my example, that even a woman is capable of emulating their boasted heroism.

But, what! no friend at hand to support me in the agony inseparable from those last moments? — not a word of consolation to sooth my departing soul? — none of my children to close my darkened eyes? — My children? — wretched woman! I never had but one! 'Tis he who awaits my arrival in the other world — who calls me — who urges my departure! — 'tis he who will

tell me which of my daughters is the most amiable, and which I have rendered the most wretched ! — Alas ! I shall no longer be in existence when they receive this monument of my unavailing remorse ! I have lived only to make them unhappy ; and even the manner of my death will perhaps call forth their bitter tears — But what dangerous ideas crowd around my imagination, and unnerve my hand ! A moment of weakness may come upon me ! quick ! quick, then ! let me hasten my departure — it is full time. — Emily ! Dorothy ! adieu ! adieu, my daughters ! and do thou, Varmont, receive the shade of thy mother !

E N D.



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ERRATUM.

In the date of the letter, page 196 of this vo-  
lume, for "six in the afternoon," read "six in the  
morning."

4 DE 58

